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HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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BRIAN VICKERS is Professor of English Literature and Director of the Centre for Renaissance Studies, ETH Zurich. He has published extensively on Francis Bacon, notably in *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge, 1968), *Essential Articles on Francis Bacon* (London, 1972), and numerous essays. He has recently edited Bacon's major English works for the Oxford Authors series, *Francis Bacon* (1996).

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FRANCIS BACON

亨利七世的治理史
及其他作品选

*The History
of the Reign of
King Henry VII
and Selected Works*

EDITED BY

BRIAN VICKERS

Professor of English Literature and

Director of the Centre for Renaissance Studies

ETH Zürich

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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT



BACON

The History of the Reign of King Henry VII

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剑桥政治思想史原著系列

丛书编辑

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

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Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought is now firmly established as the major student textbook series in political theory. It aims to make available to students all the most important texts in the history of Western political thought, from ancient Greece to the early twentieth century. All the familiar classic texts will be included but the series seeks at the same time to enlarge the conventional canon by incorporating an extensive range of less well-known works, many of them never before available in a modern English edition. Wherever possible, texts are published in complete and unabridged form, and translations are specially commissioned for the series. Each volume contains a critical introduction together with chronologies, biographical sketches, a guide to further reading and any necessary glossaries and textual apparatus. When completed, the series will aim to offer an outline of the entire evolution of Western political thought.

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Editor's note

The aim of this edition is to make Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* accessible to readers interested in the history of political thought who are not also expert in Jacobean English and Tudor history, economics, and politics. To give such readers as much help as possible I have written two sorts of footnote, one identifying the historical figures and political issues in Henry VII's reign, the other clarifying the meaning of Bacon's language. The linguistic difficulties that many modern readers experience with Bacon's English derive partly from the enormous changes that the language has undergone since his day, and partly from the technical vocabulary that he needed to use in describing Tudor social customs and legal practices. For the first, as I have shown in a recent anthology of his major English writings, his vocabulary remained to a surprising extent close to the original Latin sense of the anglicized words (*Francis Bacon* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 493–4). A glance at the glossary below under the headings 'casualties', 'corners', 'fact', 'futile', and 'strengthen' will illustrate this tendency. For the second, I have attempted to explain legal technicalities in the notes as briefly as possible, usually without citing modern authorities. Given the foreignness of much of this material, it seemed advisable to include longer explanations in the footnotes (where they are cued with a superscript number), shorter and frequently recurring ones in the glossary (where they are cued with an asterisk the first two or three times they occur). Footnotes are numbered by section in *Henry VII*, otherwise by text.

In the Introduction I have tried to sketch in the historiographical context within which Bacon was working, and to which he made such an original contribution. My debts to previous scholars are acknowledged in the notes and in the Select bibliography, but I want to thank, in addition, the series editors, Quentin Skinner and Raymond Geuss, for their helpful criticisms of the typescript, which made me address more clearly the interests of the series as a whole. Two other friends, both experienced students of Bacon's political and historical work, Stuart Clark and Markku Peltonen, also read the Introduction and offered valuable suggestions for improving it. Only I am responsible for any errors that remain.

My greatest thanks are due to my assistant for many years, Margrit Soland, for her long and sustained help in editing the text and preparing the glossary. The expertise which she acquired with word-processors, scanners, and software programmes, together with her great philological experience, made the editor's monotonous task a lot lighter. Her successor, Katherine Hahn, completed the manuscript with commendable efficiency and despatch. I should also like to thank Jean Field for her skilled copy-editing, which much improved the book's accuracy, and Margrit Soland for invaluable help with the proofs and index.

It gives me much pleasure to dedicate this book to Patrick Collinson, with gratitude for his remarkably illuminating sequence of books on the Elizabethan church and state, and with admiration for his untiring enthusiasm in encouraging and sustaining younger scholars. He seems to me to have followed that advice given by Alcuin to a bishop of Lindisfarne at the end of the eighth century: 'Never give up the study of letters, but have such young men with you as are always learning and who rejoice more in learning than in being drunk.'

Introduction

For to carry the mind in writing back into the past, and bring it into sympathy with antiquity; diligently to examine, freely and faithfully to report, and by the light of words to place as it were before the eyes, the revolutions of times, the characters of persons, the fluctuations of counsels, the courses of actions, the bottoms of pretences, and the secrets of governments; is a task of great labour and judgement. . . .¹

Composition and sources

In 1621 a concerted anti-government movement within parliament, directed against the growing corruption within James I's administration, claimed its most distinguished victim. Abandoned by James and Buckingham (the real targets of the upheaval), Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor and head of the High Court of Chancery, was impeached on charges of having accepted gifts from suitors whose trials were still pending (a minor offence compared to the venality and corruption rife elsewhere in the Jacobean court). No evidence was ever produced that Bacon's judgements had been affected, indeed the charges against him were led by two suitors who were aggrieved that their gifts to the judge – a common practice in a society based on patron-client relations – had not produced verdicts

¹ *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, tr. Francis Headlam and James Spedding in J. S. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (eds.), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols. (London, 1857–74), IV.302. Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text, in the form S, IV.302.

in their favour.² By contemporary standards it was careless of Bacon (or his servants) to have accepted these gifts, but if James and Buckingham had not made him their scapegoat he could doubtless have defended himself by pointing to the corruption around him. Without their support he had no choice but to plead guilty and to be dismissed from his post.

The *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* was the first positive outcome of his public disgrace. Deprived of office, expelled from London, Bacon retired to his house in Gorhambury and produced the work between the end of June and the beginning of October 1621, a total of fourteen weeks' work at the most. Presenting the manuscript to James I on 8 October 1621, he compared his situation to that of London merchants who, on retiring from trade, 'lay out their money upon land. So being freed from civil business, I lay forth my poor talent upon those things which may be perpetual' (S, xiv.303). James had apparently asked to see the book, and had read it by 7 January 1622, returning it to Bacon via Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke), 'commending it much to him'. The King called for some minor alterations, querying a few unusual 'words, as *epidemic*, and *mild* instead of *debonnaire*' (his servant Thomas Meautys reported), and marking for omission a short and possibly controversial passage concerning Members of parliament who had been impeached. James concluded his comments with the 'compliment that care should be taken by all means for good ink and paper to print it in; for that the book deserved it' (S, xiv.325-6). The book was published in March 1622, and dedicated to Prince Charles (p. 3 below).

That Bacon was able to write his *History* in so short a time is partly due to the fact that Henry VII's character and reign had occupied his thoughts for many years. He had described his project for writing a history of the Tudors in a letter to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere in 1605 (S, iii.249-52), and had written, perhaps at this time, a draft outline called 'The History of the Reign of K. Henry the Eighth, K. Edward, Q. Mary, and Part of the Reign of Q. Elizabeth' (pp. 209-14 below). Bacon loaned this piece to the historian John Speed, who quoted from it in his massive *Historie of*

² See Nieves Mathews, *Francis Bacon, The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp. 91-225, and Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon* (Oxford, 1996; the Oxford Authors Series), pp. 695-702. Future references to this edition will be incorporated into the text, in the form V, 695-702.

Great Britaine (1611), usually respectfully but sometimes differing in judgement. But Bacon's despatch in composing a *History* running to some 75,000 words in under four months was also due to the fact that he largely used printed sources. For earlier historians, such as Wilhelm Busch, this fact deprived Bacon's work of all originality. Today we can dismiss such judgements as anachronistic. As Stuart Clark has pointed out, the new analytical school of Renaissance historiography was concerned less with establishing new 'facts' about the past, based on first-hand research in archives, than with interpreting more cogently the facts already established.³ Any innovation in method, we might say, can only go so far. It was a great break with the medieval chronicling mentality for Renaissance historians to lay such an emphasis on analysis, on relating cause and effect, on showing the interplay between personal disposition and public policy. The further realization that historiography depends on the accurate use of contemporary documents as the basis of interpretation was the discovery of a later age.

Yet, despite his critics' complaints, Bacon did use unpublished manuscript materials. In reconstructing the proclamation issued by Perkin Warbeck (pretender to the throne) on entering Northumberland in November 1495, Bacon noted in the margin of his text: 'The original of this proclamation remaineth with Sir Robert Cotton, a worthy preserver and treasurer of rare antiquities: from whose manuscripts I have had much light for the furnishing of this work' (p. 128 below, note 1). Sir Robert Cotton (1586–1631) was a distinguished collector of manuscripts (many of which came on the market after Henry VIII's Dissolution of the monasteries), whose library was already famous. In his notebook of 1608, the *Comentarius Solutus*, Bacon reminded himself: 'For precedents and antiquities to acquaint myself and take collections from Sir Robert Cotton' (S, xi.49). At some point between 1615 and 1623 Cotton loaned Bacon the MS of William Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* to read and criticize. Bacon returned it with a number of corrections and annotations, retrieved and reproduced by Spedding from the Cottonian MSS (S, vi.351–64). In 1621, when writing the *History*, Bacon was forbidden access to London, and some scholars have

³ See the essay by Stuart Clark, 'Bacon's *Henry VII*: a case-study in the science of man', *History and Theory* 13 (1974), 97–118.

seized on this fact to argue that he could not have used manuscript sources. However, a recently discovered letter to Bacon from John Selden, dated 20 August 1621,⁴ proves that he was able to obtain copies through two intermediaries, both of whom became distinguished scholars. The first was John Borough, then one of Bacon's own secretaries, who rose from keeper of the Tower records to Garter King of Arms, and finally to principal herald under Charles I. The other was Selden himself, an outstanding figure in English jurisprudence, history, and scholarship, who records that he has 'transcribed faithfully' for Bacon several documents concerning Henry VII from records in the Tower and in the Crown office. (See another letter from Selden discussing further documents relating to the King: S, XIV.333-4.) Selden knew what he was talking about in 1622 when he wrote that, for the value of documentary evidence, only two works of British history, 'lately set forth by learned men of most excelling abilities', William Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* and Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII*, gave any idea 'either of the Truth or Plenty that may be gained from the Records of this kingdome'.

Bacon made use of this archival material for specifically documentary purposes, in order to verify details concerning statutes and parliamentary proceedings. For the main narrative of Henry's reign he relied on the major printed sources, beginning with Polydore Vergil's history – originally commissioned by Henry VII himself – the *Anglicae Historiae Libri XXVI*, first published in 1534 and reissued with an additional book (covering the period up to 1538) in 1555. Bacon sometimes used Vergil's text directly, sometimes as reworked by Edward Hall in *The Union of the Famous and Illustre Families of Lancastre and York* (1548), or by Speed. He also drew on less extensive sources, such as Robert Fabyan's *Chronicles* (1516), Sir Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* (1543), and two compilations on the life and reign of Henry VII by Bernard André. Bacon's debt to these sources is clearly visible; indeed, in some cases he accepted what we now know to have been errors, as with Vergil's

⁴ See the essay by D. R. Woolf, 'John Seldon [sic], John Borough and Francis Bacon's *History of Henry VII*, 1621', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47 (1984), 47-53. On the gradual use of archival material by English historians see F. S. Fussner, *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640* (London, 1962).

account of the quarrels between England, Brittany, and France. Yet Bacon's handling of his sources is original and independent, amplifying some elements, playing down others. Stuart Clark concludes that hardly a passage in the *History* 'does not show Bacon's re-fashioning of Hall's narrative with the intention of displaying more adequately the circumstances, plans, and motives responsible for policies and action'; Judith Anderson judges that Bacon handles his sources with 'unintrusive art', synthesizing their often inchoate material into a coherent sequence, and bringing to bear on it 'the perceptions of an experienced lawyer and politician, and a shrewd observer of "human conduct"'.⁵

Bacon's conception of history

Unlike those Renaissance historians who subscribed to the traditional, providential concept of history, where events on earth reveal the justice of God's judgements, Bacon adopted the newer historiography of Machiavelli and Guicciardini, together with a classical model increasingly admired in the Renaissance, Tacitus. The Italian historians had broken with providential history, concerning themselves explicitly with the realm of second causes, that is, human affairs, and concentrating on political events.⁶ Bacon, like them, believed that history was an important source of information and instruction but that its role should be descriptive, not prescriptive. In the *Advancement of Learning* (1605), discussing ethics, he emphasized that a knowledge of 'fraudulent and evil arts' was 'one of the best fortifications for honesty and virtue . . . So that we are much beholden to Machiavel and others, that write what men do and not what they ought to do. For it is not possible to join serpentine wisdom with the columbine innocency' -- alluding to Christ's words, 'be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves'

⁵ See Clark, 'Case-study', p. 102, Judith H. Anderson, *Biographical Truth. The Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing* (New Haven and London, 1984), pp. 171, 195-6. For further comment on Bacon's masterly re-shaping of his incoherent sources to form a thematically structured and fluent narrative see Jonathan Marwil, *The Trials of Counsel: Francis Bacon in 1621* (Detroit, Mich., 1976), pp. 165-72, and Fussner, *Historical Revolution*, pp. 264-5, 273-4.

⁶ See, in the bibliography (§3), the studies by Fueter, Gilbert, Levy, and Wilcox.

(Matt. 10: 16) – ‘except men know exactly all the conditions of the serpent’ (V, 217; S, III.430–1).⁷

The concern of the new historiography with human events and human causes had a distinguished predecessor in Tacitus, who, in the Prooemium to his *History*, had announced that he intended to concern himself ‘not only with the vicissitudes and the issues of events, which are often matters of chance, but also with their relations and their causes’. In the *Annals* Tacitus also expressed his interest in motivation, apologizing that where other histories were able to present a variety of matter, in his chosen subject ‘I have to present in succession the merciless biddings of a tyrant, incessant prosecutions, the ruin of innocence, the same causes issuing in the same results.’⁸ In the great vogue for Tacitus which arose in the sixteenth century,⁹ he became celebrated for his emphasis on hidden causes and secret motives. In his essay *How to Read History*, Caelio Curio (1503–69), a Piedmontese Protestant who became professor at Basle, wrote that Tacitus ‘was most diligent in explaining motives (*in consiliis explicandis*) and most penetrating in enquiring into causes; no one has seen more acutely or described more faithfully the arts of princes and of those around them’. Lipsius and Naudé described Tacitus as ‘skilled in revealing causes’, while Girolamo Canini (d. 1626) praised Tacitus because ‘he represented to the life . . . not only outward actions . . . but also the most secret of thoughts’. In England, Henry Savile, translating the *History* and *Agricola* in 1591, similarly praised him for his knowledge of ‘counsails and causes’; Robert Johnson, three years later, also welcomed his giving ‘explanations discovering not only sequels but causes’.¹⁰

Bacon’s familiarity with these new emphases can be seen in his earliest works. In his *Advice to Fulke Greville on his Studies* (1599)

⁷ For Bacon’s earlier discussion of this biblical text see the *Meditationes Sacrae* (1597), no. 3: ‘De Columbina Innocentia et Serpentina Prudentia’, V, 90–1; S, VII.234–5, 244–5.

⁸ *History*, I.4, *Annals*, IV.33; tr. A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb in *The Complete Works of Tacitus*, ed. Moses Hadas (New York, 1942), pp. 421, 163.

⁹ See, in the bibliography (§2), the studies by Burke, Salmon, Benjamin, and Schellhase.

¹⁰ Quotations from Peter Burke, ‘A survey of the popularity of ancient historians, 1450–1700’, *History and Theory* 5 (1966), 150–1, and Edwin B. Benjamin, ‘Bacon and Tacitus’, *Classical Philology* 60 (1965), 105, 103.

Bacon wrote: 'Of all histories I think Tacitus simply the best' (V, 105; S, IX.25). In his *Letter of Advice to the Earl of Rutland on his Travels* (1596), Bacon defined three ways in which his addressee could excel in the *vita activa*, acquiring 'that civil knowledge, which will make you do well by yourself, and do good unto others . . . : by study, by conference, and by observation'. Under the first head Bacon advised, 'Above all other books be conversant in the Histories, for they will best instruct you in matter moral, military, and politic, by which and in which you must ripen and settle your judgement.'¹¹ Under the third he wrote, 'The use of observation is in noting the coherence of causes and effects, counsels and successes, and the proportion and likeness between nature and nature, force and force, action and action, state and state, time past and time present.' Bacon not only takes over the Tacitean concern with causes but reveals its philosophical underpinning by his immediately following reference to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*: 'The philosopher did think that all knowledge doth much depend on the knowledge of causes; as he said, "id demum scimus cuius causam scimus".'¹² Bacon's mature theory of history reiterated his concern to discover causes. In the *Advancement of Learning* (1605) he distinguishes three main historical genres, of which the first is 'Memorials', that is, 'the first or rough draughts of history', consisting of 'Registers', or 'collections of public acts, as decrees of council, judicial proceedings', and so on, which lack 'a perfect continuance or contexture of the thread of narration', and 'Commentaries', which 'set down a continuance of the naked events and actions, without the motives or designs, the counsels, the speeches, the pretexts, the occasions, and other passages of action' which belong to a 'Just and Perfect History' – 'perfect' meaning 'complete' (V, 178–9; S, III.333–4). In the *De augmentis scientiarum* (1623), the expanded Latin translation of the *Advancement of Learning*, in a passage probably written after he had finished *Henry VII*, and which may be taken as describing both his ideal and his own practice, he

¹¹ V, 73; S, IX.12–13. On Bacon's authorship of this letter see Vickers, V, 539–41, and 'The authenticity of Bacon's earliest writings', *Studies in Philology* 93 (1996): 248–96.

¹² V, 74–5; S, IX.14. The passage from Aristotle (*Anal. Post.*, I.2.71b 9ff) was rendered in the early Latin translations as 'tum scimus cum causam cognoscimus'.

emphasized that 'above all things (for this is the ornament and life of Civil History), I wish events to be coupled with their causes' (*S*, IV.300–1).

Bacon also drew on Tacitus as the acknowledged authority on the arts of simulation and dissimulation, so brilliantly displayed by the emperor Tiberius. For Renaissance political theorists in the increasingly popular 'reason-of-state' tradition, the overriding political virtue was prudence, which they connected with an interest in *arcana imperii* ('state secrets') ascribed to Tacitus. The most striking link between Tacitism and the literature of dissimulation is found in the work of Tacitus' greatest editor and commentator, Justus Lipsius, whose *Politiorum libri sex* (1589) distinguished 'various kinds of dissimulation or deceit, "small", "medium", and "large" – advocating the first, tolerating the second, and condemning only the third'.¹³ Bacon expresses a similar distinction in his Essay 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation' (below, pp. 226–7), which is also notable for several references to Tacitus. In that section of the *Advancement of Learning* dealing with 'the architect of fortune, or the conduct of life' (*V*, 272ff; *S*, III.154ff), quotations from Tacitus are used to illustrate 'politic' behaviour, while Bacon's concluding assessment of Henry VII – his 'Commemoration' or obituary notice – includes some unmistakably Tacitean emphases on the King's 'closeness' and 'secrecy' (below, pp. 199–200).

In his theory and practice of historiography Bacon was well aware of classical and Renaissance models, both for the form of history-writing and its substance. The form of *Henry VII* is annalistic, treating the King's reign year by year, the method adopted by Livy, the most influential classical historian for the early Renaissance. Livy was followed by the first of the great Florentine humanist historians, Leonardo Bruni, while his successor Poggio preferred to imitate Sallust, who subordinated chronology to the discussion of broader themes. Guicciardini, in his *Storia d'Italia*, reverted to the annalistic form, which acts as a stabilizing element in his extremely complex narrative, with its bewilderingly frequent changes of place.¹⁴

¹³ Peter Burke, 'Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state', pp. 482, 485.

¹⁴ See, in the bibliography (§3), the studies by Wilcox, Phillips, Luciani, and Cochrane.

Bacon's model, however, was not Livy but Tacitus. In the *Advancement of Learning* he divides the third and major category of Civil History, 'perfect history', into Chronicles, Lives, and Narrations (see below, p. xx), with an afterthought:

There is yet another partition of history which Cornelius Tacitus maketh, which is not to be forgotten, specially with that application which he accoupleth it withal, Annals and Journals: appropriating to the former matters of estate, and to the latter acts and accidents of a meaner nature. (*V*, 178-83; *S*, III.333-8)

Bacon quotes a passage from the *Annals* (XIII.31) to define the substance of an annalistic approach, matters of state and 'great achievements'. As for its form, a few pages later Bacon again singles out Tacitus' *Annals* for praise as preserving the unity or 'harmony' of events:

For it is the harmony of philosophy in itself which giveth it light and credence; whereas if it be singled and broken it will seem more foreign and dissonant. For as when I read in Tacitus the actions of Nero or Claudius, with circumstances of times, inducements, and occasions, I find them not so strange; but when I read them in Suetonius Tranquillus gathered into titles and bundles, and not in order of time, they seem more monstrous and incredible. (*V*, 204-5; *S*, II.365-6)

Suetonius organized his *Lives of the Caesars* by topics, not chronologically, forfeiting Tacitus' ability to identify 'inducements', that is, the causes or circumstances leading to an event or action. Although Bacon adopts the annalistic framework for his *History of the Reign of King Henry VII*, marking off the separate years of Henry's reign, chronicling events within Britain and then recording parallel happenings in Europe, he freely rearranges the movements between home and abroad (as compared to Polydore Vergil, say) to produce a more unified structure. The Perkin Warbeck episode exemplifies this clarification of events and their interrelationships. 'Instead of following a strict chronological sequence Bacon allowed the demands of his argument to determine his discussion of particular points.'¹⁵

¹⁵ Fussner, *Historical Revolution*, p. 274.

Bacon's other formal debt to classical and Renaissance histories concerned the insertion into the narrative of fully worked-out orations. The links between rhetoric and history were strong in both periods, the two disciplines sharing common goals, including the two relevant rhetorical genres, epideictic rhetoric (an ethical mode which represents virtue as admirable, vice despicable) and deliberative or political rhetoric (which concerns the expediency of a particular course of action). Classical historians, notably Thucydides and Livy, had freely invented speeches to express what an ambassador or a ruler would have said on a particular occasion, and their practice was emulated by Bruni, Poggio, and others. Sometimes historians used the 'dialogue oration', paired speeches by the two parties to a debate, which can be either complementary or contradictory. In the same way Bacon writes extensive speeches (set off in the early editions by being printed in larger type, and italics), for Henry's Chancellor, Archbishop Morton, propounding the King's explanation of 'the cause of Brittany to both houses' of parliament (pp. 49-54), for Henry himself, addressing both houses about his intention to invade France (pp. 82-4), and answering the Pope's commissioner (p. 167-8). Bacon also invents appropriately arrogant speeches for Perkin Warbeck (pp. 125-8; 129-32), and matching orations for the French and English ambassadors (pp. 73-8, 78-80).

Besides its annalistic structure, *Henry VII* combines two of Bacon's main categories for Civil History, namely Chronicles and Lives. Here Bacon seemingly wanted to overcome the disadvantages of concentrating either on 'a Time, or a Person', taken on their own:

Of these, although the first be the most complete and absolute kind of history and hath most estimation and glory, yet the second excelleth it in profit and use . . . For History of Times representeth the magnitude of actions and the public faces and deportments of persons, and passeth over in silence the smaller passages and motions of men and matters. But such being the workmanship of God as he doth hang the greatest weight upon the smallest wires, 'maxima e minimis suspendens', it comes therefore to pass, that such histories do rather set forth the pomp of business than the true and inward resorts thereof. But Lives, if they be well written, propounding to themselves a person to represent in whom actions both greater and smaller,

public and private, have a commixture, must of necessity contain a more true, native, and lively representation. (V, 179-80; S, III.334)

Henry VII is both the history of a reign and the biography of a ruler, taking – so far as the available material allowed – the ‘smaller passages and motions of men’, those ‘true and inward resorts’ which are also linked with the bigger patterns, for here too, God ‘hangeth great weights upon small wires’ (below, p. 157). In his dedication to Prince Charles, Bacon wrote that in treating Henry ‘I have not flattered him, but took [portrayed] him to life as well as I could, sitting so far off, and having no better life’ (p. 3, below). Presenting a copy to Charles’s sister, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, in April 1622, Bacon wrote: ‘If King Henry the Seventh were alive again, I hope verily he could not be so angry with me for not flattering him, as well-pleased in seeing himself so truly described in colours that will last and be believed’ (S, XIV.365). The repeated metaphor of himself as a portrait painter gives an important clue to Bacon’s conception of his role as historian. The King’s own person is to be the centre of interest, his portrait will not be idealized but true to life, credible even if critical.

Bacon’s history, while sharing the concerns of his models, Tacitus, Machiavelli, and Guicciardini to produce empirical observation and analysis of characters rather than moralizing or idealizing pictures, goes beyond those admired figures in relating history to his own specific concerns to unify knowledge. As some modern scholars have emphasized (best of all Stuart Clark¹⁶), Bacon explicitly declared in his most substantial philosophical work, the *Novum Organum*, that he gave history the same importance as ‘natural philosophy [and] the other sciences, logic, ethics, and politics’ in contributing to the unified study of human behaviour, the *Doctrina de homine* (S, IV.112). The *Essays* of 1612 and 1625, like the expanded sections of the *De augmentis* Books VII and VIII, were all fulfilments of Bacon’s call for an empirical and inductive study of the factors affecting human behaviour – age, health, environment, human dispositions, life-styles, heredity, fortune, and much else.¹⁷ *Henry VII*

¹⁶ See, in the bibliography (§6), the essays by Clark, Dean, and Nadel.

¹⁷ See the essay by R. S. Crane, ‘The relation of Bacon’s *Essays* to his program for the advancement of learning’, in *Schelling Anniversary Papers* (New York, 1923), pp. 87–105.

is a further contribution to the knowledge of 'the different characters of natures and dispositions', as called for in the *De augmentis* (Book VII, chapter iii), materials for which knowledge the student of moral philosophy can best derive from

the wiser sort of historians, not only from the commemorations which they commonly add on recording the deaths of illustrious persons, but much more from the entire body of history as often as such a person enters upon the stage; *for a character so worked into the narrative gives a better idea of the man* than any formal criticism and review can; such is that of Africanus and Cato the Elder in Livy, of Tiberius, and Claudius, and Nero in Tacitus, . . . and the Popes Leo and Clement in Francesco Guicciardini. For these writers, having the images of those persons whom they have selected to describe constantly before their eyes, hardly ever make mention of any of their actions without inserting something concerning their nature. (S, v.21; my italics)

A 'full and careful treatise' can be constructed out of such materials, Bacon adds, but it ought not to take the form of 'complete individual portraits'. Rather, it should reproduce

the several features and simple lineaments of which they are composed, and by the various combinations and arrangements of which all characters whatever are made up, showing how many, and of what nature these are, and how connected and subordinate one to another; that so we may have a scientific and accurate dissection of minds and characters, and the secret dispositions of particular men may be revealed. (S, v.22)

Bacon's account of Henry VII is an essay in this kind of psychological analysis, describing the King's 'nature', drawing attention to the determining 'features and lineaments' in his character which help account for his actions.

Bacon was distinctive among English historians in emphasizing psychology as a key to understanding both the nature of man and political action, but he was also working in a tradition established by the Italian humanist historians, Bruni, Poggio, and della Scala, who all invoked psychological elements in order to explain the inner workings of historical phenomena and particularly of political institutions. Bacon's probable model, however, was Guicciardini in his

Storia d'Italia, for whom 'individual men remained the sole agents of historical change', and 'the ultimate causes of historical action were psychological. What happened in history, he assumed, was the result not immediately of the will of individual historical agents but of the particular combination of character traits that determined what these agents would will.'¹⁸

Analysis and inference

Bacon's analysis of Henry VII is based on a similar conviction that character traits were independent of the will, for he can only make sense of the King's repeated behaviour patterns by postulating underlying psychological causes. Bacon used inference freely, attaching particular emphasis to three motifs in Henry's life, interpreted in psychological terms: the insecurity of the circumstances by which he acceded to the crown, which Bacon uses to explain Henry's general suspiciousness and rather unfriendly treatment of his Queen; Henry's variable performance in terms of the prudence or foresight necessary to a ruler; and his avarice.

Bacon lays great emphasis on the dubious nature of Henry's title to the throne, arguing that his victory at Bosworth carried more weight than his dynastic claims to the crown, being weaker than those of his Yorkist wife (pp. 7-12, 15, 20, 23). He also chronicles in some detail the sequence of rebellions and conspiracies fomented by the ousted Yorkists (pp. 20-2, 33-4, 60-2), the threat represented by the surviving Yorkist heirs, Warwick (pp. 10, 160-2) and the sons of John de la Pole (pp. 25, 30-5, 139, 168-9, 178-80, 189-90, 197). Bacon lavishes much attention and literary skill on the remarkable fact that Henry's reign was disturbed by two royal impostors, Lambert Simnel (pp. 22-36) and the more famous Perkin Warbeck¹⁹ (pp. 95-115, 117-19, 124-32, 148-55, 159-62). Bacon several times records Henry's 'universal suspicion' (p. 27)

¹⁸ Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1982), p. 299. See also Donald J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 49-58, 134-8, 189-93, and Mark Phillips, *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1977), pp. 130, 139.

¹⁹ See Brian Vickers, 'Bacon's use of theatrical imagery' in W. A. Sessions (ed.), *Francis Bacon's Legacy of Texts* (New York, 1990), and John Ford, *The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck: A Strange Truth* (1634).

and lack of trust. This suspicion had relatively minor effects, such as when Henry's 'continual vigilance did suck in sometimes causeless suspicions which few else knew' (p. 34), but also more serious ones, as in 1488, when he 'was possessed with many secret fears touching his own people; which he was therefore loth to arm, and put weapons into their hands' (p. 43). As the most extreme state of distrust that Henry reached Bacon records 'a strange tradition that the King, lost in a wood of suspicions, and not knowing whom to trust', derived 'intelligence [from] the confessors and chaplains of divers great men; and for the better credit of his espials abroad with the contrary side, did use to have them cursed at Paul's (by name) amongst the bead-roll of the King's enemies' (p. 106). This is a device reminiscent of the counter-espionage practices of modern times, and in his concluding 'Commemoration' of the King (also printed in larger type, and italics) Bacon expresses his strong moral disapproval: to give spies 'credence by oaths or curses, that cannot be well maintained, for those are too holy vestments for a disguise' (p. 201). Bacon's psychological analysis concludes that this continuous insecurity adversely affected Henry's personality, making him 'a dark prince, and infinitely suspicious' (p. 202): 'He was indeed full of apprehensions and suspicions' (*ibid.*). The standard modern study agrees that 'The Problem of Security' was a major issue for Henry and that it undoubtedly helped form his suspicious nature.²⁰ However, it finds no hidden political motives in Henry's postponement of Elizabeth's coronation until after he had settled the Yorkist rebellion of 1487, nor does it endorse Bacon's account of Henry's coolness towards the Queen.

Having (rightly) diagnosed the King's suspiciousness in his political life, in the public sphere Bacon also attributed to him a lack of foresight at the beginning of his reign, 'being in his nature and constitution of mind not very apprehensive or forecasting of future events far off, but an entertainer of fortune by the day' (p. 9), a judgement repeated in his concluding assessment: 'His wisdom, by often evading from perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him than into a providence to prevent and remove them afar off' (p. 203). Bacon then poses the question 'whether it were the shortness of his

²⁰ See the study by S. B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972), pp. 52, 68-94, 307-8.

foresight, or the strength of his will, or the dazzling of his suspicions' that created 'the perpetual trouble of his fortunes', for these must have been caused by some defects 'in his nature, customs, and proceedings' (pp. 203-4) – like Guicciardini still, individual men and their psychological make-up are the main agents of historical change. Yet, on the other side, and far more often, he celebrates Henry as 'a wise and watchful King' (pp. 20, 28, 37, 180, 183), 'having the composition of a wise King, stout without and apprehensive within' (p. 24), 'both wise, stout, and fortunate' (p. 162). Bacon several times records the success of Henry's prudence in both domestic and foreign policy: 'These things he did wisely foresee, and did as artificially [skilfully] conduct, whereby all things fell into his lap as he desired' (p. 85), praising Henry as 'a prince of great and profound judgement' (pp. 21, 170), 'a prudent and courageous Prince' (pp. 42-3). Evaluating Henry according to the Renaissance virtue of *prudentia*, Bacon does not shrink from ascribing to him the arts of the politic Machiavellian, familiar to us from Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge plays. In dealing with Perkin Warbeck, Henry 'chose to work by countermine. His purposes were two; the one to lay open the abuse, the other to break the knot of the conspirators' (p. 103). He sent out 'secret and nimble scouts and spies', double-agents pretending to serve Warbeck but revealing their discoveries to him; 'others he employed . . . to be his pioners in the main countermine' (p. 105). Both groups were used 'to practise', 'to assail, sap, and work' into the secrets of Warbeck's supporters (pp. 105, 106). Bacon justifies Henry's use of 'secret spials', for 'he had such moles perpetually working and casting to undermine him' (p. 201), and he records the public and international esteem that Henry acquired by these methods. By 1495 the King 'was grown to such a height of reputation for cunning and policy that every accident and event that went well was laid and imputed to his foresight, as if he had set it before' (p. 118). By 1500 he 'had gotten such high estimation for his wisdom and sufficiency' (p. 168) that even his superficial acts were taken as profound, especially abroad, for ambassadors not only reported his 'wisdom and art of rule' to their kings but themselves continued to pass on information to him when they were recalled home, 'such a dexterity he had to improprieate to himself all foreign instruments' (p. 200). Since the most recent editor of *Henry VII* has accused Bacon of a major contradiction on

this issue,²¹ it is worth reiterating that Bacon registered a double verdict on Henry, as having both lacked prudence and (more often) displayed it. The best modern authority, S. B. Chrimes, arrived at a similarly divided judgement, finding the King both 'essentially an opportunist' who lacked foresight, and an astute diplomat, 'cautious, prudent, patient'.²²

The third psychological motif which Bacon identified, the King's avariciousness, was something he had already diagnosed in his earlier sketch of Henry: 'of nature he coveted to accumulate treasure' (p. 213). Polydore Vergil had denounced the King's greed as a major vice, but placed its onset late in the King's reign, with his appointment of Empson and Dudley to the Council Learned in the Law. Subsequent historians (Hall, Holinshed) had played down this character trait, unsuitably inglorious for the ruler who had united the families of York and Lancaster. Bacon differed from all his predecessors in finding evidence of this vice throughout Henry's career, not just with his new institution of the Council Learned in the Law. To begin with it took the legitimate form of raising money through parliament, but at his first mention of the King's desire for 'profit to his coffers, whereof from the very beginning he was not forgetful', Bacon draws attention to the presence of greed in the king's 'nature', judging that Henry 'had been more happy at the latter end, if his early providence, which kept him from all necessity of exacting upon his people, could likewise have attempered his nature therein' (p. 18). Henry's raising of money through taxes passed by parliament (pp. 60, 121, 135) was legitimate, if unpopular; but he verged on the unconstitutional by reviving the euphemistically called 'benevolences', which Edward IV had used and Richard III abolished (pp. 85-6, 123, 130, 182). On a national scale, Bacon presents Henry as exploiting the sovereign's right to raise money for wars, loyally granted by parliament (pp. 48, 55, 85, 135), with a main eye to profit: 'which treasure, as a noise of war might draw forth, so a peace succeeding might coffer up' (p. 48; also pp. 43, 135). Bacon then delivers the damning verdict that Henry used

²¹ See the edition by J. Weinberger (Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 1996), pp. 9-16, 215-52. But another unsympathetic commentator has objected that Bacon departed from his sources precisely in order to emphasize the king's prudence. Marwil, *Trials of Counsel*, pp. 174-8.

²² Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 219, 232, 272; and 287-8, 318.

the threat of a war as a pretext for making money: 'he did but traffic with that war, to make his return in money' (p. 84, also pp. 78, 135), and even inserts into Perkin Warbeck's proclamation (against all the documentary evidence) the accusation that Henry had been 'making merchandise of the blood, estates, and fortunes of our peers and subjects by feigned wars and dishonourable peace, only to enrich his coffers' (p. 129).

In the private sector Bacon shows the King exploiting his legitimate royal rights to the full by raising money through confiscating the land and property of disloyal subjects (pp. 18, 29, 112). But Henry went much further than any English king before him, breaking all canons of law and decency by his ruthless use of quasi-legal processes against wealthy subjects. Already in 1494, Bacon judges, there 'began to be discovered in the King that disposition which afterwards, nourished and whet on by bad counsellors and ministers, proved the blot of his times: which was the course he took to crush treasure out of his subjects' purses by forfeitures upon penal laws' (pp. 116-17 and note 5). The case of Sir William Capel, Alderman of London, condemned for a huge sum of money, did cause 'men [to] startle the more at this time, because it appeared plainly to be in the King's nature, and not out of his necessity, he being now in float for treasure', having just 'received the peace-money from France, the benevolence-money from his subjects, and great casualties [windfalls] upon the confiscations' (p. 117). This 'disposition' of his 'nature', this psychological trait which made the King so unpopular among his subjects (pp. 178, 198-9, 202), was given full encouragement by his 'two instruments, Empson and Dudley, whom the people esteemed as his horse-leeches and shearers' (pp. 174-5).

Henry made these two trusted servants – lawyers, privy councillors, each in turn speaker of the House of Commons – the leading figures in an institution he set up, the 'Council Learned in the Law', which had a dual function, to try certain Crown prosecutions and to collect Crown debts. Being outside the common law courts, this body could prosecute at will, issue fines, using the threat of the Privy Seal, and put anyone who resisted into prison for long periods, without trial. Bacon's analysis of all the legal tricks, subterfuges, and bare-faced flouting of justice practised by these two corrupt lawyers (pp. 174-8), is much more detailed than that of any

previous historian, assuming a knowledge of legal procedures that few modern readers possess. Bacon writes with the professional interest of a lawyer, but also with the growing indignation of any right-minded person at the grotesque abuse of office by these 'two persons, [who] turned law and justice into wormwood and rapine', with all the many 'courses, fitter to be buried than repeated, they had of preying upon the people' like 'hawks'. Bacon's sources for legal and parliamentary matters in Henry's reign include the Law Reports and the Statutes of the Realm, but on this matter he must have had access to a manuscript from the King's household accounts (perhaps through the good offices of Sir Robert Cotton), for he records 'to have seen long since a book of accounts of Empson's, that had the King's hand almost to every leaf by way of signing, and was in some places postilled in the margent with the King's hand likewise' (p. 178). It is only relatively recently that historians have come across these account-books from the Household Chamber, which indeed have the King's annotations on every page.

Bacon's originality in making Henry's avarice a leading psychological motif in his public policies, at home and abroad, disputed by some later writers, has been vindicated by modern historians.²³ We now know that Henry was the first English ruler to descend to the roles of accountant and debt-collector himself, personally instigating many of the prosecutions in order to raise money. Henry also ruthlessly exploited legal institutions, such as attainder (processes against subjects suspected of high treason, whose land and property were forfeited, and not always returned when the attainder was reversed), the royal right to profits from wardships and marriages, and the imposing of bonds and obligations on rich men (by which most of the peerage were forced to fulfil certain undertakings on pain of forfeiting large sums of money). The gradual recovery and editing of manuscript material concerning the royal finances has confirmed Bacon's account of the injustices perpetrated and documented many of which he could not have known. His account of Henry's final 'great remorse [at] the oppressions of Dudley and Empson' is borne out by some clauses in the King's

²³ See, in the bibliography (§4), the studies by Chrimes, Guy, and Lander. Weinberger, in his recent edition (p. 186n), apparently ignorant of recent historical research, denies the accuracy of Bacon's account.

will (p. 194 and note 13), as we now know, and it has received poignant confirmation in a remarkable document, only published in 1972. In 1489 Dudley, imprisoned in the Tower and awaiting execution (he and Empson were accused of treason and executed by Henry VIII as a sop to public indignation), set down from memory eighty-four cases of unjust exactions which he had made on behalf of Henry, in the hope that he could bring 'help and relief for the dead King's soul'.²⁴ Modern scholars agree with Bacon that rapacity undoubtedly caused Henry's unjust financial policies, together with the other psychological trait which Bacon identified, the King's inherited insecurity.

Bacon's originality, compared to previous historians of Henry VII, lay primarily in his coherent interpretation of the King's politics in terms of his psychological make-up. Two other personal emphases concern parliament and the law. Bacon gave parliament considerable prominence in his narrative, all the more remarkable given that Henry VII's parliaments are the least documented of any since the reign of Edward III: 'whereas the reports of Hall and Speed would together barely fill a page, more than fifteen percent of Bacon's text is devoted to parliamentary activities'.²⁵ Bacon's object was evidently to show contemporary readers how a parliament should be conducted, and his emphasis occasionally resulted in anachronisms, such as interpreting the *De facto* act in seventeenth-century terms, and attributing too great an importance to statute-making in the period preceding the major Tudor reforms.²⁶ Bacon's interest in parliamentary proceedings reflected his own experience, covering forty years in both houses, and was intended to demonstrate the place of practical politics in government.

Even more pronounced, again without any precedent in previous historians, was the attention Bacon gave to the laws passed in parliament, which are always commented on (pp. 15, 17, 53, 86, 119), and sometimes discussed in great detail (pp. 56-60, 64-9, 121-4, 197-8). Bacon praises Henry for cultivating 'the lasting fruit of parliament, which is good and wholesome laws, . . . [which] yet continue to this day' (p. 56). Among the 'excellent laws' that Henry made Bacon singles out those which addressed not just the peace of

²⁴ From Dudley's confession, found in Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 311.

²⁵ Marwil, *Trials of Counsel*, p. 179.

²⁶ Fussner, *Historical Revolution*, pp. 271-2.

the realm but the well-being of 'private houses and families', such as an 'excellent moral law' against the abduction of heiresses, a 'charitable law for the admission of poor suitors' (legal aid, as we would call it), 'good and politic laws . . . against usury', laws designed to correct the depopulation caused by enclosure, statutes to make justices of the peace perform their duties properly, and various reforms of criminal justice. In his comments on these legal issues Bacon reveals his own life-long concern for justice and equity, which can be seen in his many proposals for legal reform during thirty years of his professional career as a lawyer.²⁷ But while apologizing for this 'long insisting upon the laws that were made in this King's reign', partly 'because it hath some correspondence to my person', he states that he has done so in order to remedy the 'defect even in the best writers of history, that they do not often enough summarily deliver and set down the most memorable laws that passed in the times whereof they write, being indeed the principal acts of peace. For though they may be had in original books of law themselves; yet that informeth not the judgement of kings and counsellors and persons of estate so well as to see them described and entered in the table and portrait of the times' (pp. 68-9). And in the amount of personal research Bacon performed in the legal records – documentary evidence not used by any previous historian of that reign – he fulfils one function of the historian well appreciated in modern times, to investigate the social and political significance of legal systems. It may be, as some commentators object, that he overestimated Henry's excellence by hailing him as 'the best lawgiver to this nation after King Edward the First' (p. 64), but he left his readers in no doubt as to the important duty of the monarch, together with parliament, to constantly scrutinize and improve the laws of the realm. In praising Henry VII, the ancestor of James I, and in dedicating this book to the future King Charles I, Bacon was fulfilling the duty of a counsellor to give his sovereign good advice on governing the country.

In summary, Bacon's *History* fulfils the criteria that he laid down, combining a narrative of a complete sequence of events with a psychological analysis of the motivations lying behind political decisions. The emphasis throughout is on the ruler rather than the

²⁷ See Daniel R. Coquillette, *Francis Bacon* (Edinburgh, 1992).

realm, and even where Bacon deals with economic and social history it is always in connection with the King and his counsellors as the motivating forces in public affairs. England's foreign policies, similarly, are seen in terms of the King's reactions to events abroad, only occasionally from a non-English, non-Henrician perspective. Bacon's sustained focus on motives gives his *History* a unity to which the shapeless chronicles of Hall and Speed could never aspire. While he can periodically ground his diagnosis of motivation on documentary or factual evidence, much of it is intuitive, based on Bacon's own extensive political experience and on a calculated assessment of probabilities. 'Being an astute lawyer as well as a most intelligent observer of human nature – as his *Essays* prove – Bacon had a highly developed sense of what was probable', and in his hands probability provided both a critical tool to demolish mistaken interpretations and the basis for many of his own historical explanations.²⁸ Although the limitations of the psychological approach in Renaissance historiography are apparent, Bacon's *History* is a vindication of its validity in the realm of politics.

Bacon's political thought in the *Essays*

If *Henry VII* follows the model of Tacitean annals, constructing a narrative that allows us to see the natural relations between causes and effects, separated by distances of time and space, the *Essays* belong more to the form used by Suetonius, being arranged by 'titles' or topics. Originally (in 1597) consisting of ten short sequences of aphorisms, embodying Bacon's own observations on man's civic and political existence, expanded in 1612 and again in 1625, Bacon's *Essays* contain the fruits of a lifetime's involvement with politics. As a student of classical and Renaissance history and biography, Bacon could draw both on a series of notebooks kept throughout his life recording historical exempla, and on his own experience as an intellectual in the political arena, a conscientious, awkward, and ultimately unfortunate actor on that stage. I have selected five essays which have a particular value in defining Bacon's political thinking, although many others would be relevant in part, and they need to be supplemented by the long discussion in the

²⁸ Fussner, *Historical Revolution*, p. 268.

Advancement of Learning of 'Civil Knowledge', which Bacon divides into three main topics, 'Conversation, Negotiation, and Government' (V, 265–88; S, III.445–76).

The proper understanding of Bacon's political thought has been obscured in recent times by a tendency to hail his utterances as having timeless value, transcending their historical context, or as being prophetic of a 'modern' age, which he either 'anticipated' or helped to create. But whoever approaches the *Essays* without preconceptions will soon realize that they reflect political attitudes widespread through the European Renaissance, and even specifically English political issues, such as the union of England and Scotland which James I wished to establish. The essay 'Of Seditions and Troubles' expresses that fear of civic disorder which obsessed a majority of Renaissance theorists of government, identifying the causes of danger and the remedies. However, Bacon does not recommend an absolutist state, as some commentators imagine, but one needing to maintain a balanced relationship between government, nobility, and the common people. It follows that anything that might disturb this balance – poverty, famine, uneven distribution of wealth, social injustices, sudden changes in religion or laws – should be prevented, not by repressive legislation but by positive social planning for the benefit of the community as a whole, according to that ideal of working 'pro bono publico' that inspired the humanist conception of a *vita activa*.

A specifically Renaissance attitude, unimaginable in modern Western political thought, is expressed in the essay 'Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates', where Bacon coolly analyses the most effective ways in which a state can enlarge itself. The crucial requirement, he decides, is not wealth but an army, formed when needed from a sturdy populace – best of all, yeomen farmers – trained in war, ready to bear arms when the opportunity arises for expanding their country's land and power.²⁹ Following through the logic of this argument in the dispassionate manner he admired in Machiavelli, Bacon draws on the common Renaissance idea that every body, natural or civic, needs to maintain its health by exercise,³⁰ concluding that, for a 'kingdom or estate, a just and

²⁹ For a very similar argument see *Henry VII*, pp. 66–7 below.

³⁰ See, e.g., Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 205ff, and Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, IV.v.218ff: 2 *Servant*. 'This peace is nothing but to rust iron, increase tailors,

honourable war is the true exercise' (p. 256). As Markku Peltonen has shown, this essay draws on ideas that Bacon first formulated between 1603 and 1608, the nature of civic greatness being a lively issue during the early years of James I's reign. It also expresses concepts common to the classical republican tradition, formulated most clearly by the generation of Harrington and Milton but already visible in Bacon and other writers of his age influenced by Cicero and Machiavelli. These concepts include the classical idea of a mixed constitution, not an absolutist state but one where virtuous citizens who serve the state can share ruling power. Bacon's conception of a state's greatness being dependent on citizens ready to bear arms and perform other public services is so different from modern notions as to make any claims for the 'modernity' of this essay obviously misplaced, but in denying their historicity critics distort other texts, if not so glaringly.

Still, what remains valuable in these political essays is not the attitudes expressed but the analytical keenness which identifies the factors at issue, those variables which affect the successful exercise of government. Bacon's political thinking does not constitute a system; but that is precisely its strength. The great difficulty with 'Civil Knowledge', he wrote in the *Advancement*, is that it concerns 'a subject which of all others is most immersed in matter, and hardest reduced to axiom' (V, 265), 'Negotiation' comprising what he called a 'Doctrine concerning scattered occasions' (S, v.35), not easily organized into a system. Although this profusion of circumstances in personal and political activity makes it hard to generalize 'axioms' or scientific laws, Bacon still pursues that goal. His approach is partly analytical, partly advisory. In 'Of the True Greatness' he distinguishes the pure size of a country – which can be computed in terms of finance, population, the size of cities and towns (in the manner of the 'political arithmetic' soon to be developed by Sir William Petty, a professed admirer of Bacon) – from its political power, which lies primarily in the disposition of its populace to war, and secondarily in the skill of its rulers in introducing and maintaining laws and customs which will support their fighting spirit. In 'Of Empire' he defines the unhappy condition of

and breed ballad-makers.' *1. Servant*. 'Let me have war, say I . . . it's sprightly, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy, mull'd, deaf, sleepy, insensible, a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men.' This conversation obviously satirizes the stock attitudes.

rulers, having 'few things to desire, and many things to fear', briefly identifying all the power-groups with which kings have to deal – neighbouring states, their own wives and children, the clergy, nobles, commons, merchants, soldiers – from all of whom 'arise dangers, if care and circumspection be not used' (pp. 237–8). The essay then moves from analysis to advice, locating the sources of danger, and attempting to find the appropriate 'rule' or precept in each case – for neighbouring states, for instance, 'there can no general rule be given (the occasions are so variable), save one, which ever holdeth', that princes keep a close watch on their boundaries to prevent encroachment (pp. 238–9). In 'Of Counsel' advice becomes the very subject-matter of discussion, but it, too, includes analysis, treating the necessity for a ruler to take counsel, together with its inconveniences, the disadvantages of relying on advisers, and 'the remedies' for them. In 'Of Seditions and Troubles' he will 'speak first of the Materials of seditions; then of the Motives of them; and thirdly of the Remedies' (p. 231). Bacon's constant practicality is seen in the speed with which he moves from theory to practice, diagnosing a problem and instantly seeking a solution. His goal throughout is to identify the obstacles to the rational conduct of government, and to find ways of overcoming them.

Even in the small selection included here we can see the variety of approaches that makes the *Essays* such a multi-faceted work. Bacon's political thought ranges from the Tacitism in 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation' to the classical republicanism in 'Of the True Greatness', with a variety of diagnosis and counsel derived partly from his own political experience and partly from his huge knowledge of history. Although he expressed his admiration for Machiavelli's neutral descriptions of human behaviour, detached from the moral imperatives traditionally invoked in political treatises, there is another, conflicting strand in Bacon's thought, for which the Christian concept of charity represents the highest ethical principle (V, xxxv–xxxvi, 246–7, 262–4). It is from this basis that Bacon condemns the social injustices perpetrated by Henry VII's two 'leeches', Empson and Dudley, and the King's misuse of false oaths. In 'Of Simulation and Dissimulation' Bacon joins Vives, another Christian humanist, in expressing contempt for 'the weaker sort of politiques' that resort to dissimulation, for 'openness and frankness of dealing' is the mark of 'a strong wit and a strong heart'.

While 'an habit of secrecy is both politic and moral', satisfying both demands, he expresses a forthright condemnation of 'simulation and false profession as being 'more culpable, and less politic', having the grave defect that 'it depriveth a man of one of the most principal instruments for action, which is trust and belief' (pp. 225-8). The simultaneous acknowledgement of the dualities involved in politics, the competing claims of Machiavellian amorality and Christian ethics (the 'four pillars of government' he defines as 'Religion, Justice, Counsel, and Treasure': p. 231), makes Bacon a writer whose political thought continues to challenge by its openness to the complexities of human behaviour.

Principal events in Bacon's life

- 1561 Born at York House, London, 22 January, the youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, and Ann, second daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke.
- 1573 Goes to Trinity College, Cambridge, with his elder brother Anthony in April; matriculated in July.
- 1575 Leaves Cambridge in December.
- 1576 Admitted to Gray's Inn. Travels to the Continent and stays in France for almost three years in the embassy of Sir Amias Paulet.
- 1579 Returns to England after his father's death; commences his studies at Gray's Inn.
- 1581 Sits for the first time in parliament for Bossiney in Cornwall.
- 1582 Admitted to the bar as an utter barrister.
- 1584 Sits in parliament for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis. Writes his earliest political tract, *A Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth*.
- 1586 Becomes a benchler of Gray's Inn; sits in parliament for Taunton.
- 1588 Gives his first reading at Gray's Inn on Advowsons. Appointed to a committee of lawyers to review existing statutes.
- 1589 Sits in parliament for Liverpool. Writes *An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England*.

Principal events in Bacon's life

- 1592 Writes *Of Tribute, or Giving That Which Is Due*, and *Certain Observations Made upon a Libel Published This Present Year, 1592*.
- 1593 Sits in parliament for Middlesex; opposes the subsidy bill.
- 1594 Appointed Deputy Chief Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster and made Queen's Counsel Extraordinary. Writes *A True Report of the Detestable Treason, Intended by Dr. Roderigo Lopez*, and a device for the Gray's Inn Revels. Compiles *A Promus of Formularies and Elegancies*. Argues in Chudleigh's case.
- 1595 Writes *Of Love and Self-love*.
- 1596 Writes *Maxims of the Law*.
- 1597 Sits in parliament for Ipswich. Publishes the first edition of *Essayes*, including *Religious Meditations* and *Places of Perswasion and Disswasion*.
- 1600 Gives his reading on the Statute of Uses.
- 1601 Sits in parliament for Ipswich. Publishes *A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons Attempted and Committed by Robert, Late Earl of Essex*.
- 1602 Writes *A Confession of Faith*. Argues in Slade's case.
- 1603 Knighted. Publishes *A Brief Discourse Touching the Happy Union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland*. Writes *De interpretatione naturae proœmium*, *Temporis partus masculus*, and *Valerius Terminus of the Interpretation of Nature*.
- 1604 Sits in parliament for Ipswich. Publishes *Apology in Certain Imputations Concerning the Late Earl of Essex*, and *Certain Considerations Touching the better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England*. Writes *Cogitationes de natura rerum* and *Cogitationes de scientia humana*.
- 1605 Publishes *The Advancement of Learning*.
- 1606 Marries Alice Barnham.
- 1607 Appointed Solicitor General. Writes *Cogitata et visa*, *Filum labyrinthi*, and *Partis instaurationis secundae delineatio et argumentum*.
- 1608 Argues in Calvin's case. Writes *Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland, In felicem*

Principal events in Bacon's life

	<i>memoriam Elizabethae, Of the True Greatness of the Kingdom of Britain, and Redargutio philosophiarum.</i>
1609	Publishes <i>De sapientia veterum</i> .
1611	Writes <i>Phaenomena universi, De vus mortis, and De fluxu et refluxu maris</i> .
1612	Publishes the second edition of <i>Essays</i> . Writes <i>De principiis atque originibus, Descriptio globi intellectualis, and Thema coeli</i> .
1613	Appointed Attorney General.
1614	Sits in parliament for Cambridge University. Publishes <i>The Charge Touching Duels</i> .
1616	Becomes a member of the Privy Council. Writes <i>Proposition Touching Amendment of Laws</i> . Argues in the case of <i>de non procedendo Rege inconsulto</i> .
1617	Appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal.
1617	Granted the title of Lord Chancellor. Created Baron Verulam.
1619	Arthur Gorges's translation of <i>De sapientia veterum</i> published.
1619	Publishes the preliminary material of <i>Instauratio magna</i> as well as <i>Novum Organum</i> , together with <i>Parasceve ad historiam naturalem et experimentalem</i> .
1621	Created Viscount St Alban. Impeached.
1622	Publishes <i>The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh</i> and <i>Historia ventorum</i> , the first instalment of his <i>Historia naturalis et experimentalis</i> . Writes <i>Advertisement Touching a Holy War</i> and <i>Abecedarium novum naturae</i> .
1623	Publishes <i>Historia vitae et mortis</i> and <i>De augmentis scientiarum</i> . Writes <i>Historia densi et rari</i> .
1624	Writes <i>Considerations Touching a War with Spain, New Atlantis, Magnalia naturae, praecipue quoad usus humanos, and Sylva Sylvarum</i> .
1625	Publishes the third edition of <i>The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall; Apophthegms New and Old, and Translation of Certain Psalms</i> .
1626	Dies at London, 9 April. <i>Sylva Sylvarum</i> and <i>New Atlantis</i> posthumously published.

Select bibliography

1. Renaissance political thought

The best starting-point would be either Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978), or J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700* (Cambridge, 1991). Two valuable recent studies which break fresh ground are Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572–1651* (Cambridge, 1993), and Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1995).

2. Tacitus in the Renaissance

On the importance of Tacitus for Renaissance political theorists there are three illuminating articles by Peter Burke, 'A survey of the popularity of ancient historians, 1450–1700', *History and Theory* 5 (1966), 135–42; 'Tacitism', in T. A. Dorey (ed.), *Tacitus* (London, 1969), pp. 149–71; and 'Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state', in Burns and Goldie, *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, pp. 479–98; see also J. H. M. Salmon, 'Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England', in Linda L. Peck (ed.), *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 169–88. The pioneering study of Tacitus as a source for Renaissance historians of early Britain remains the unpublished PhD thesis by Mary Frances Tenney, 'Tacitus in the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance

and in England to about the year 1650' (Cornell University, 1931), which thoroughly documents Bacon's use of Tacitus (pp. 356-69). The best generally available account of Bacon's debt to Tacitus is still Edwin B. Benjamin, 'Bacon and Tacitus', *Classical Philology* 60 (1965), 102-10, superior to the derivative account given by Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago, 1976), otherwise a useful study.

3. Renaissance historiography

The pioneering study was Eduard Fueter, *Geschichte der neueren Historiographie* (Munich and Berlin, 1911, rev. edn, 1936), not without weaknesses: see Donald J. Wilcox, *The Development of Florentine Humanist Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 27-8. Also valuable are Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini. Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton, N.J., 1965), especially Part II: 'History' (pp. 203-30, 322-6, 331-7), F. Smith Fussner, *The Historical Revolution. English Historical Writing and Thought 1580-1640* (London, 1962); and F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, Calif., 1967), especially ch. vii, 'Political history', pp. 237-85. For Polydore Vergil see the excellent edition and translation of his *Anglica Historia* by Denys Hay, Camden Society, n.s., 74 (London, 1950), based on the manuscript version but with quotations from the later printed texts; also Hay's monograph, *Polydore Vergil. Renaissance Historian and Man of Letters* (Oxford, 1952). For the Italian historians see also Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1982), and Mark Phillips, *Francesco Guicciardini: The Historian's Craft* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1977). For Bacon's extensive use of Guicciardini see Vincent Luciani, 'Bacon and Guicciardini', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 62 (1947), 96-113.

4. Henry VII in Tudor history

The pioneering study was by Wilhelm Busch, *England unter den Tudors, I, König Heinrich VII* (Stuttgart, 1892) - no further volume published; Eng. trans. A. M. Todd, *England under the Tudors, I,*

Henry VII (London, 1895; repr. New York, 1956): see especially the first appendix for a review of the sources, which results in a dismissal of Bacon as a historian. The weaknesses of Busch's account were made good by the fullest and best-documented modern study, S. B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972). Also useful are J. R. Lander, 'Bonds, coercion, and fear; Henry VII and the peerage', in J. G. Rowe and W. H. Stockdale (eds.), *Florilegium Historiale: Essays Presented to Wallace K. Ferguson* (Toronto, 1971); D. M. Loades, *Politics and the Nation 1450-1660. Obedience, Resistance and Public Order* (Brighton, 1974); and John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988).

5. Francis Bacon

For the whole range of Bacon's life and work the essential reference remains the magnificent edition carried through by James Spedding (with the assistance of R. L. Ellis, D. D. Heath, and Francis Headlam), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols. (London, 1857-74). This edition has been reprinted several times: by Friedrich Frommann Verlag (Stuttgart, 1962; unfortunately, in severely reduced format); by the Garrett Press (New York, 1968), and by Routledge (London, 1996; 14 volumes in 13). For an edition of the major English works (the *Essays*, *Advancement of Learning*, *New Atlantis*) and some less familiar writings (including texts not known to Spedding), with full annotation, see Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon* (Oxford, 1996; the Oxford Authors Series). An up-to-date collective survey of the whole range of Bacon's work is provided in Markku Peltonen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge, 1996), especially Brian Vickers, 'Bacon and rhetoric' (pp. 200-31), John F. Tinkler, 'Bacon and history' (pp. 232-59), and Markku Peltonen, 'Bacon's political philosophy' (pp. 283-310). On Bacon's life, a major recent study, which dispels many of the defamatory myths that have become associated with him, is Nieves Mathews, *Francis Bacon. The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven and London, 1996). A valuable account of Bacon's career as a lawyer, judge, and proponent of legal reform is Daniel R. Coquillette, *Francis Bacon* (Edinburgh, 1992), in the series *Jurists: Profiles in Legal Theory*. Jonathan Marwil, *The Trials of Counsel. Francis Bacon in 1621* (Detroit, Mich., 1976), purports to be a study

of the biographical circumstances in which Bacon composed his *History*, but in the event reviews Bacon's whole political career in the most negatively biased terms imaginable. For some account of its distortions see Nieves Mathews, 'Francis Bacon upside down', *Baconiana* 62 (1979), 61-71, and Brian Vickers, 'Francis Bacon and the progress of knowledge', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992), 495-518, at 499-501.

6. The reign of King Henry VII

The first modern edition, still essential, was by Spedding, in vol. vi of the *Works*, based on the surviving manuscript written by one of Bacon's secretaries, with the author's corrections (British Library, Add. MS 7084). J. R. Lumby, however, based his Pitt Press edition (rev. edn Cambridge, 1892) on the first printed text (1622). All later editions have followed Spedding's choice of copy-text: these include Vittorio Gabrieli (Bari, 1964) – text in English, commentary in Italian; Roger Lockyer, for the Folio Society (London, 1971); F. J. Levy (Indianapolis and New York, 1972); and J. Weinberger (Ithaca, N.Y. and London, 1996). This most recent edition is valuable for its careful collation of the manuscript and first printed text, and for its commentary, which records exactly where Bacon followed and where he deviated from his sources, yet fails to acknowledge the deliberate artistry that this displays. In his introduction and 'Interpretive Essay' (both confusingly argued) Weinberger judges Bacon anachronistically, in terms of later political theory, resulting in many strange conclusions. Apparently viewing Bacon through the eyes of James Harrington, a later exponent of republicanism (although he also subsequently rejects Harrington), Weinberger ascribes to Bacon the intention of showing that Henry VII consciously wished to reduce the powers of the nobility as such in order to empower the people, somehow anticipating 'modern republicanism and democracy' (pp. 12-13, 227-44). But Bacon's narrative tells a quite different story, that Henry depressed the nobility in order to replenish his coffers and make himself more secure against attack; nowhere does Henry show any signs of wishing to 'secure the people to himself', or to prepare them for self-government. Weinberger's estimate of Bacon is distorted by another anachronism, the animus towards science that has become fashionable in

recent times. So he attacks the *New Atlantis* as 'Bacon's strange and even repulsive picture of the technological world to come', a 'repellent' project of 'grim, lobotomized technological hedonism', full of 'denatured zombies'. Bacon is demonized as 'the very thinker who helped lay the basis for modern nihilism', and for encouraging the rise of 'modern technology [which] can serve any master, including the most monstrous of tyrannies' (pp. 243-51). It hardly needs pointing out how far this view is from the philanthropic idealism of Bacon's science, and how irrelevant it is in forming a properly historical estimate of his work.

Of critical studies, the best starting-point remains Stuart Clark, 'Bacon's *Henry VII*: a case-study in the science of man', *History and Theory* 13 (1974), 97-118, which exposes the anachronism behind Busch's dismissal of Bacon as a historian and convincingly shows the place of Bacon's theory and practice of history-writing in his whole programme for the reform and renewal of knowledge. Two other essays which valuably place Bacon's historiography in its correct historical context are L. F. Dean, 'Sir Francis Bacon's theory of civil history-writing', *ELH* 8 (1941), 161-83, reprinted in Brian Vickers (ed.), *Essential Articles for the Study of Francis Bacon* (Hamden, Conn., 1968; London, 1972), pp. 211-35, and George H. Nadel, 'History as psychology in Francis Bacon's theory of history', *History and Theory* 5 (1966), 275-87, repr. in *Essential Articles*, pp. 236-50. A useful discussion of Bacon's theory and practice of history is F. S. Fussner, 'Sir Francis Bacon and the idea of history', in *The Historical Revolution* (§3 above), pp. 253-74. The final chapter of Marwil's book (§5 above) continues its unrelievedly cynical and hostile interpretation of Bacon's motives and political behaviour, yet is forced to praise *Henry VII* for the lucidity with which it discusses complex problems (p. 159), its considerable advance over its sources (pp. 165, 172), its remarkable coherence and skill in narrative (pp. 166-72), and its masterly treatment of parliamentary proceedings (pp. 179-82). A further corrective to Busch's belief that Bacon used no primary sources was provided by D. R. Woolf's discovery of manuscript material proving that he did: see his essay 'John Seldon [sic], John Borough and Francis Bacon's *History of Henry VII*, 1621', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 47 (1984), 47-53.

A sensitive, wide-ranging study placing Bacon in the context of other sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century biographies (by

Bede, Cavendish, Roper, More, Walton, Shakespeare), is Judith H. Anderson, *Biographical Truth. The Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing* (New Haven and London, 1984). On the Perkin Warbeck episode, which Bacon partly conceived in dramatic terms, see Brian Vickers, 'Bacon's use of theatrical imagery', in W. A. Sessions (ed.), *Francis Bacon's Legacy of Texts* (New York, 1990), pp. 171-213. Bacon's account was the acknowledged inspiration for John Ford's play, *The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck: A Strange Truth* (1634): see the edition by Peter Ure (London, 1964), pp. xxxv-xlv. In the dedicatory epistle Ford acknowledged that 'Out of the darkness of a former age (enlightened by a late both learned and an honourable pen) I have endeavoured to personate a great attempt, and in it a greater danger' (p. 5).

7. The *Essays*

Spedding is once again the fundamental source, still the only edition to print the complete texts of the 1597, 1612, and 1625 versions (S, vi.367-591). Spedding collated the manuscript text of thirty-four essays which (also in a secretary's hand, with Bacon's autograph corrections and revisions) has survived in the British Library (Harley MS 5106) dated between 1607 and 1612, having the suggestive title 'The Writings of Sr Francis Bacon Knt. The King's Solicitor Generall: in Morallitie, Policie, and Historie', and gives occasional references to it. The full text appeared (not always accurately) in the useful parallel-column edition by Edward Arber, *A Harmony of Bacon's Essays* (London, 1895).

Many valuable editions of the *Essays* have appeared in the last 150 years, outstanding ones being those by W. Aldis Wright (London, 1862), E. Abbott, 2 vols. (London, 1876), and S. H. Reynolds (Oxford, 1890). The fullest modern edition is by Mario Melchionda, *Gli 'Essayes' di Francis Bacon*. Studio Introduttivo, Testo Critico e Commento (Florence, 1979): text in English, extensive commentary in Italian. The best edition in English was produced by Michael Kiernan, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (Oxford, 1985). A modern-spelling edition, with full annotation, is included in Brian Vickers (ed.), *Francis Bacon* (Oxford, 1996).

There have been many critical studies of the *Essays*, but few concerned with their political ideas. A welcome exception is Markku Peltonen, 'Politics and science: Francis Bacon and the true greatness of states', *Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 279–305, reprinted in his *Classical humanism* (above, §1), pp. 190–228. On the place of the *Essays* within Bacon's whole scheme of knowledge the best study remains R. S. Crane, 'The relation of Bacon's *Essays* to his program for the advancement of learning', in *Schelling Anniversary Papers* (New York, 1923), pp. 87–105; repr. in *Essential Articles*, pp. 272–92. For their successive alterations see Brian Vickers, *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge, 1968), ch. 7 (pp. 202–4, 217–31).

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The History of the Reign of King Henry VII

To the
Most Illustrious and Most Excellent
CHARLES,
Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall, Earl of Chester,
etc.

It may please your Highness,

In part of my acknowledgement to your Highness, I have endeavoured to do honour to the memory of the last King of England that was ancestor to the King your father and yourself; and was that King to whom both Unions may in a sort refer; that of the Roses being in him consummate, and that of the Kingdoms by him begun. Besides, his times deserve it. For he was a wise man, and an excellent King; and yet the times were rough, and full of mutations and rare accidents. And it is with times as it is with ways. Some are more up-hill and down-hill, and some are more flat and plain; and the one is better for the liver,* and the other for the writer. I have not flattered him, but took him to life as well as I could, sitting so far off, and having no better light. It is true, your Highness hath a living pattern, incomparable, of the King your father. But it is not amiss for you also to see one of these ancient pieces. God preserve your Highness.

Your Highness's most humble
and devoted servant,
FRANCIS ST. ALBAN.

The History of the Reign of King Henry VII

[The Defeat of Richard III: Bosworth,
22 August 1485]

After that Richard, the third¹ of that name, king in fact* only, but tyrant both in title² and regiment*, and so commonly termed and reputed in all times since, was by the Divine Revenge, favouring the design of an exiled man, overthrown and slain at Bosworth Field; there succeeded in the kingdom the Earl of Richmond, thenceforth styled Henry the Seventh.³ The King immediately after the victory, as one that had been bred under a devout mother and was in his nature a great observer of religious forms, caused *Te Deum Laudamus* to be solemnly sung in the presence of the whole army upon the place, and was himself with general applause and great cries of joy, in a kind of militar* election or recognition, saluted King.⁴

Meanwhile the body of Richard after many indignities and reproaches (the dirigies* and obsequies* of the common people towards tyrants) was obscurely buried. For though the King of his nobleness gave charge* unto the friars of Leicester⁵ to see an

¹ Richard Duke of Gloucester (1452–85), brother of Edward IV, second in line of accession, succeeded to the throne in 1483, having disposed of the legitimate heir; he was killed at the battle of Bosworth on 22 August 1485.

² parliament had been compelled to confirm Richard's title as King, illegally.

³ Henry Tudor Earl of Richmond (1457–1509) lived in exile in Brittany between 1471 and 1485, sheltered by Francis II, Duke of Brittany.

⁴ After the victory his soldiers acclaimed Henry King, and Lord Thomas Stanley placed on his head the 'crown' of Richard III, found among the battle spoils.

⁵ The order of Grey Friars (Market Bosworth is near Leicester).

honourable interment to be given to it, yet the religious* people themselves (being not free from the humours* of the vulgar*) neglected it; wherein nevertheless they did not then incur any man's blame or censure. No man thinking any ignominy or contumely* unworthy of him, that had been the executioner of King Henry the Sixth (that innocent Prince) with his own hands; the contriver of the death of the Duke of Clarence, his brother; the murderer of his two nephews (one of them his lawful King in the present, and the other in the future, failing of him⁶); and vehemently suspected to have been the impoisoner of his wife,⁷ thereby to make vacant his bed for a marriage within the degrees forbidden.⁸ And although he were a Prince in militar virtue approved*, jealous of the honour of the English nation, and likewise a good law-maker for the ease and solace of the common people; yet his cruelties and parricides* in the opinion of all men weighed down his virtues and merits; and in the opinion of wise men, even those virtues themselves were conceived to be rather feigned and affected things to serve his ambition, than true qualities ingenerate* in his judgement or nature.

And therefore it was noted by men of great understanding (who seeing his after-acts looked back upon his former proceedings) that even in the time of King Edward his brother he was not without secret trains* and mines to turn envy* and hatred upon his brother's government; as having an expectation and a kind of divination that the King, by reason of his many disorders*, could not be of long life, but was like* to leave his sons of tender years; and then he knew well how easy a step it was from the place of a Protector* and first Prince of the blood to the Crown. And that out of this deep root of ambition it sprang, that as well at the treaty of peace that passed between Edward the Fourth and Lewis the Eleventh of France, concluded by interview of both Kings at Piqueny,⁹ as upon all other occasions, Richard, then Duke of Gloucester, stood ever upon the side of honour, raising his own reputation to the disadvan-

⁶ Should he die without issue.

⁷ For graphic accounts of these actual or suspected crimes see Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Bacon follows his main sources, Polydore Vergil and Speed, on Richard's evil character.

⁸ Kinship relations within which marriages are prohibited. Rumour had it that Richard wished to marry his niece Elizabeth, already betrothed to the future King Henry.

⁹ A treaty concluded at Picquigny, near Amiens, in 1475.

tage of the King his brother, and drawing the eyes of all (especially of the nobles and soldiers) upon himself; as if the King by his voluptuous life and mean marriage¹⁰ were become effeminate, and less sensible* of honour and reason of state than was fit for a King. And as for the politic and wholesome laws which were enacted in his time, they were interpreted to be but the brocade* of an usurper, thereby to woo and win the hearts of the people, as being conscious to himself that the true obligations of sovereignty¹¹ in him failed and were wanting.

But King Henry, in the very entrance of his reign and the instant of time when the kingdom was cast into his arms, met with a point of great difficulty and knotty to solve, able to trouble and confound the wisest King in the newness of his estate; and so much the more, because it could not endure a deliberation*, but must be at once deliberated and determined.* There were fallen to his lot, and concurrent* in his person, three several* titles to the imperial crown. The first, the title of the Lady Elizabeth¹² with whom, by precedent pact¹³ with the party that brought him in,¹⁴ he was to marry. The second, the ancient and long disputed title (both by plea and arms)¹⁵ of the house of Lancaster, to which he was inheritor in his own person. The third, the title of the sword or conquest for that he came in by victory of battle, and that the king in possession was slain in the field. The first of these was fairest* and most like* to give contentment to the people, who by two-and-twenty years reign of King Edward the Fourth¹⁶ had been fully made capable* of the clearness* of the title of the White Rose or house of York; and by the mild and plausible* reign of the same King towards his latter

¹⁰ The King's wife, the widow of Sir John Grey, was not of noble blood.

¹¹ The true bonds which secure the obedience of subjects (a right to the throne).

¹² Elizabeth of York (1465–1503), eldest daughter of Edward IV.

¹³ Previous agreement: on Christmas Day 1483 Henry contracted to marry Elizabeth, at the urging of his moderate Yorkist supporters, some of whom expected him to rule by way of Elizabeth's right to the throne.

¹⁴ Helped him to power.

¹⁵ The *plea* argued on behalf of the Lancastrian line was that Edmund Earl of Lancaster ought to have succeeded Henry III in 1272, not Edward I, from whom Henry IV descended; the claim by arms was through the *de facto* Kings Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI. Henry VII, being descended from the Lancastrian John of Gaunt through the illegitimate Beauforts, had a dubious claim to the throne.

¹⁶ Edward (1442–83), elder son of Richard Duke of York, who had married Elizabeth Woodville, ruled from 1461 to 1483.

time,¹⁷ were become affectionate* to that line.¹⁸ But then it lay plain before his eyes, that if he relied upon that title, he could be but a King at courtesy*, and have rather a matrimonial than a regal power; the right remaining in his Queen, upon whose decease, either with issue or without issue, he was to give place and be removed. And though he should obtain by parliament to be continued,¹⁹ yet he knew there was a very great difference between a King that holdeth his crown by a civil act of estates,²⁰ and one that holdeth it originally by the law of nature and descent of blood. Neither wanted there even at that time secret rumours and whisperings (which afterwards gathered strength and turned to great troubles) that the two young sons²¹ of King Edward the Fourth, or one of them (which were said to be destroyed in the Tower), were not indeed murdered but conveyed secretly away, and were yet living: which, if it had been true, had prevented the title of the Lady Elizabeth.²² On the other side, if he stood upon his own title of the house of Lancaster, inherent in his person, he knew it was a title condemned by parliament,²³ and generally prejudged* in the common opinion of the realm, and that it tended directly to the disinherison of the line of York, held then the indubiate* heirs of the crown. So that if he should have no issue by the Lady Elizabeth, which should be descendants of the double line, then the ancient flames of discord and intestine* wars, upon the competition of both houses, would again return and revive.

As for conquest, notwithstanding Sir William Stanley, after some acclamations of the soldiers in the field, had put a crown of ornament²⁴ (which Richard wore in the battle and was found amongst

¹⁷ Towards the end of his reign.

¹⁸ The house of York, accepted as legitimate sovereigns. But there is no contemporary evidence of opposition to Henry's legitimacy (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 50).

¹⁹ Recognized as King during his lifetime.

²⁰ The three estates of the realm (Lords, Commons, and Convocation), hence 'a King by act of parliament'.

²¹ Edward V and Richard Duke of York.

²² Blocked: since their claim to the throne would have been prior to hers.

²³ In November 1461 parliament rejected the title of the house of Lancaster (and hence the two previous monarchs, Henry IV and Henry V) to the throne, allowing Henry VI to reign during his lifetime, to be succeeded by the house of York. But Richard Duke of Gloucester, having had Henry deposed and murdered, put his elder brother Edward IV on the throne.

²⁴ An ornamental crown (not the official one).

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the spoils*) upon King Henry's head, as if there were his chief title; yet he remembered well upon what conditions and agreements he was brought in; and that to claim as conqueror was to put as well his own party as the rest into terror and fear; as that which gave

Isabella Kings² of Spain; and James the Third King of Scotland: with all of which Kings and states the King was at that time in good peace and amity. At which day also (as if the crown upon his head had put perils into his thoughts) he did institute for the better security of his person a band of fifty archers under a captain to attend him, by the name of Yeomen-of-his-Guard*; and yet that it might be thought to be rather a matter of dignity, after the imitation of that he had known abroad, than any matter of diffidence* appropriate to his own case, he made it to be understood for an ordinance* not temporary, but to hold in succession for ever after.

The seventh of November the King held his parliament³ at Westminster, which he had summoned immediately after his coming to London. His ends in calling a parliament (and that so speedily) were chiefly three. First, to procure the crown to be entailed* upon himself. Next to have the attainders⁴ of all his party (which were in no small number) reversed, and all acts of hostility by them done in his quarrel* remitted and discharged; and on the other side, to attain* by parliament the heads and principals of his enemies. The third, to calm and quiet the fears of the rest of that party by a general pardon;⁵ not being ignorant in how great danger a King stands from his subjects, when most of his subjects are conscious in themselves that they stand in his danger.* Unto these three special motives* of a parliament was added, that he as a pru-

² Joint rulers.

³ In Henry's reign parliament consisted of the Lords temporal and spiritual (amounting to about 90 in all), together with a separate chamber of Commons, elected members from the shires and boroughs (about 290). parliaments were called mainly to provide fiscal contributions, but also to pass legal measures. During the twenty-three years of his reign Henry called seven parliaments, which sat for a total of seventy-two weeks. In addition the King five times convened his Great Council (Lords without the Commons), independently of parliament, to deal with important matters of state, such as threats of war and rebellion, and to authorize the imposition of financial aid in advance of a parliamentary grant (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 135-46).

⁴ 'The legal consequences of a sentence of death or outlawry, i.e. forfeiture of estate, deprivation of rank or title, and loss of civil rights generally' (SOED). Attainders could be reversed.

⁵ The Latin translation adds that 'the men of lesser rank, who had adhered to Richard, would receive a general pardon, which in the end was issued by the King personally. The King's indulgence included all crimes and misdemeanours (except those specifically listed in the manual of remission); further, the payments due to the King were forgiven and cancelled.'

dent and moderate prince made this judgement, that it was fit for him to haste to let his people see that he meant to govern by law, howsoever he came in by the sword; and fit also to reclaim* them to know him for their King, whom they had so lately talked of as an enemy or banished man. For that which concerned the entailing of the crown (more* than that he was true to his own will, that he would not endure any mention of the Lady Elizabeth, no* not in the nature of special entail), he carried* it otherwise with great wisdom and measure. For he did not press to have the act penned by way of declaration or recognition of right; as on the other side he avoided to have it by new law or ordinance; but chose rather a kind of middle way, by way of establishment, and that under covert and indifferent⁶ words; 'that the inheritance of the crown should rest, remain, and abide in the King, etc.': which words might equally be applied, that the crown should continue to him; but whether as having former right to it (which was doubtful), or having it then in fact and possession (which no man denied), was left fair* to interpretation either way. And again for the limitation of the entail, he did not press* it to go farther than to himself and to the heirs of his body, not speaking of his right* heirs; but leaving that to the law to decide; so as the entail might seem rather a personal favour to him and his children, than a total disinherison to the house of York. And in this form was the law drawn and passed. Which statute he procured to be confirmed by the Pope's Bull⁷ the year following, with mention nevertheless (by way of recital) of his other titles both of descent and conquest. So as now the wreath* of three was made a wreath of five. For to the three first titles, of the two houses or lines and conquest, were added two more; the authorities parliamentary and papal.

The King likewise in the reversal of the attainders of his partakers, and discharging them of all offences incident to his service and succour, had his will*; and acts did pass accordingly. In the

⁶ Having a hidden or obscure meaning; equivocal. As Bacon's explication shows, the text was capable of two different interpretations, both of which would establish the Crown on Henry. Chrimes quotes the bill, describing it as 'a masterpiece of terse assertion' declaring a *fait accompli* (*Henry VII*, p. 62).

⁷ 'In March 1486 the Pope . . . formally recognized his title in a Bull which Henry caused to be printed and circulated throughout the realm – the earliest example in England of the use of the new invention of printing for political propaganda' (Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 103).

passage whereof, exception* was taken to divers persons in the House of Commons, for that they were attainted, and thereby not legal, nor habilitate* to serve in parliament, being disabled* in the highest degree; and that it should be a great incongruity to have them to make laws who themselves were not inlawed.* The truth was, that divers of those which had in the time of King Richard been strongest and most declared for the King's party,⁸ were returned* Knights and Burgesses* of the parliament; whether by care or recommendation from the state, or the voluntary inclination of the people; many of which had been by Richard the Third attainted by outlawries*, or otherwise. The King was somewhat troubled with this. For though it had a grave and specious* show, yet it reflected upon his party. But wisely not shewing himself at all moved therewith, he would not understand it but as a case in law, and wished the judges to be advised thereupon, who for that purpose were forthwith assembled in the Exchequer-chamber⁹ (which is the counsel-chamber of the judges), and upon deliberation they gave a grave and safe opinion and advice, mixed with law and convenience; which was, that the knights and burgesses attainted by the course of law should forbear to come into the house till a law were passed for the reversal of their attainders. [But the judges left it there, and made no mention whether after such reversal there should need any new election or no, nor whether this sequestering of them from the house were generally upon their disability, or upon an incompetency that they should be judges and parties in their own cause. The point in law was, whether any disability in their natural capacity could trench* to their politic* capacity, they being but procurators* of the commonwealth and representatives and fiduciaries* of counties and boroughs; considering their principals stood upright and clear, and therefore were not to receive prejudice from their personal attainders.]¹⁰

It was at that time incidentally moved* amongst the judges in their consultation, what should be done for the King himself, who

⁸ That of the present King (formerly Earl of Richmond).

⁹ The judges of the three common-law courts at Westminster were sometimes summoned to this room in order to advise the King on points of law (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 159-61).

¹⁰ This parenthesis, as Spedding showed, is found in the MS but was removed from the printed text on the order of King James I (*S*, vi.38 note).

likewise was attainted.* But it was with unanimous consent resolved that the crown takes away all defects and stops* in blood, and that from the time the King did assume the crown the fountain was cleared, and all attainders and corruption of blood discharged.¹¹ But nevertheless, for honour's sake, it was ordained by parliament that all records wherein there was any memory or mention of the King's attainder should be defaced, cancelled, and taken off the file.

But on the part of the King's enemies there were by parliament attainted, the late Duke of Gloucester, calling himself Richard the Third, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey, Viscount Lovel, the Lord Ferrers, the Lord Zouch, Richard Ratcliffe, William Catesby, and many others of degree and quality. In which bills of attainders, nevertheless, there were contained many just and temperate clauses, savings, and provisoes; well shewing and foretokening the wisdom, stay,* and moderation of the King's spirit¹² of government. And for the pardon of the rest that had stood against the King, the King upon a second advice thought it not fit it should pass by parliament, the better (being matter of grace*) to impropriate* the thanks to himself: using only the opportunity of a parliament time, the better to disperse it into the veins of the kingdom. Therefore during the parliament he published his royal proclamation, offering pardon and grace of restitution¹³ to all such as had taken arms or been participant of any attempts against him, so as they submitted themselves to his mercy by a day,¹⁴ and took the oath of allegiance and fidelity to him; whereupon many came out of sanctuary,¹⁵ and many more came out of fear, no less guilty than those that had taken sanctuary.

¹¹ Attainted persons were disabled in the law (indeed, legally dead); they could neither inherit lands from their ancestors nor retain those they possessed, nor transmit them to any heir. The justices decided that Henry 'was discharged of his attainder *ipso facto* on taking upon himself to reign and to be King' (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 61).

¹² This word still had the original sense of *spiritus*, 'the animating or life-giving principle in humans and animals' (SOED).

¹³ The opportunity of repairing their offence by submission, so being restored to their possessions.

¹⁴ By a given date.

¹⁵ A place which had acquired (either by ancient custom or religious associations) a protective status for fugitives, who were immune from arrest within its boundaries.

As for money or treasure, the King thought it not seasonable or fit to demand any of his subjects at this parliament; both because he had received satisfaction from them in matters of so great importance, and because he could not remunerate them with any general pardon (being prevented therein by the coronation pardon passed immediately before); but chiefly, for that it was in every man's eye what great forfeitures and confiscations¹⁶ he had at that present to help himself; whereby those casualties* of the crown might in reason spare the purses of the subject; specially in a time when he was in peace with all his neighbours. Some few laws passed at that parliament, almost for form sake: amongst which there was one to reduce* aliens, being made denizens, to pay strangers' customs;¹⁷ and another to draw to himself the seizures and compositions* of Italians' goods for not employment,¹⁸ being points of profit to his coffers, whereof from the very beginning he was not forgetful; and had been more happy at the latter end, if his early providence, which kept him from all necessity of exacting* upon his people, could likewise have attempered* his nature therein. He added during parliament to his former creations the ennoblement or advancement in nobility of a few others. The Lord Chandos of Brittany was made Earl of Bath; Sir Giles Daubeney was made Lord Daubeney;¹⁹ and Sir Robert Willoughby Lord Brooke.

The King did also with great nobleness and bounty (which virtues at that time had their turns* in his nature) restore Edward Stafford, eldest son to Henry Duke of Buckingham, attainted in the time of King Richard, not only to his dignities but to his fortunes

¹⁶ This and a later (1487) act of resumption declared void all grants of crown land made since the death of Henry VI, and revoked old leases so that more profitable ones could be made; both steps increased the royal income (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 63, 123-4). Henry acquired the estates of the Duchies of Gloucester and Norfolk by dating his reign from the day before the battle of Bosworth (Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 95).

¹⁷ Naturalized residents from abroad were made to pay the same (higher) customs' duties as non-naturalized foreigners (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 195, 222-3).

¹⁸ According to a law passed to restrain the export of English currency, foreign traders (the largest group being Italian) were fined, or had their goods seized, if they did not spend the earnings they made from imports on buying English goods. The King then decided to appropriate this revenue for himself.

¹⁹ Giles Daubeney (1451-1508) made his name as a soldier, and became one of the King's closest advisors, being created baron in 1486 and chamberlain of the household in 1495. A respected soldier and administrator, André described him as 'a good man, prudent, just, honest, and loved by all'.

and possessions, which were great; to which he was moved also by a kind of gratitude, for that the Duke was the man that moved the first stone against the tyranny of King Richard, and indeed made the King a bridge to the crown upon his own ruins. Thus the parliament brake up.²⁰

The parliament being dissolved, the King sent forthwith money to redeem the Marquis Dorset and Sir John Bouchier,²¹ whom he had left as his pledges* at Paris for money which he had borrowed when he made his expedition for England; and thereupon he took a fit occasion to send the Lord Treasurer and Mr Bray²² (whom he used as counsellor) to the Lord Mayor of London, requiring of the City a prest* of six thousand marks.²³ But after many parleys* he could obtain but two thousand pounds; which nevertheless the King took in good part, as men use to do that practise* to borrow money when they have no need.

About this time the King called unto his Privy Council²⁴ John Morton²⁵ and Richard Fox,²⁶ the one Bishop of Ely, the other Bishop of Exeter; vigilant men and secret, and such as kept watch with him almost upon all men else. They had been both versed in his affairs before he came to the crown, and were partakers of his adverse fortune. This Morton soon after, upon the death of Bouchier, he made Archbishop of Canterbury. And for Fox, he made him

²⁰ On 4 March 1486.

²¹ Afterwards Lord Berners, whose translation of Froissart's *Chronicle* was published in 1532. He, like the Marquis of Dorset, was a disaffected Yorkist who had joined Henry's exile in Brittany.

²² Sir Reginald Bray (d. 1503), member of the King's Council, and a principal financial administrator.

²³ The mark was equal to two-thirds of a pound: hence £4,000.

²⁴ A small group of the highest officers in the realm, including the chancellor, the treasurer, the keeper of the Privy Seal, and five other trusted councillors (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 97-144). The King usually presided in person.

²⁵ Morton (c.1420-1500), trained as a lawyer, joined Henry in exile and on his accession became the King's chief advisor. An astute politician, who served Lancastrian, Yorkist, and Tudor kings, he was created Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor in 1486, and became Cardinal in 1493, anticipating the pluralism of Wolsey (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 105-6).

²⁶ Fox (c.1448-1528), a lawyer trained at Oxford and Paris, was in touch with the exiled Henry, being appointed principal secretary and keeper of the Privy Seal on his accession. A loyal servant to Edward IV, and successively Bishop of Exeter, Bath and Wells, Durham, and Winchester, Fox played a major part in state affairs, especially foreign diplomacy (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 34-5, 116-17).

Lord Keeper of his Privy Seal; and afterwards advanced* him by degrees, from Exeter to Bath and Wells, thence to Durham, and last to Winchester. For although the King loved to employ and advance bishops, because having rich bishoprics they carried their reward upon themselves;²⁷ yet he did use to raise them by steps; that he might not lose the profit of the first-fruits,²⁸ which by that course of gradation was multiplied.

[The King's Marriage to Elizabeth of York,
18 January 1486]

At last upon the eighteenth of January was solemnized the so long expected and so much desired marriage between the King and the Lady Elizabeth; which day of marriage was celebrated with greater triumph* and demonstrations (especially on the people's part) of joy and gladness than the days either of his entry or coronation; which the King rather noted than liked. And it is true that all his life-time, while the Lady Elizabeth lived with him (for she died before him), he shewed himself no very indulgent husband towards her, though she was beautiful, gentle and fruitful.¹ But his aversion toward the house of York was so predominant in him as it found place not only in his wars and councils, but in his chamber and bed.

Towards the middle of the spring the King, full of confidence and assurance, as a prince that had been victorious in battle, and had prevailed* with his parliament in all that he desired, and had the ring* of acclamations fresh in his ears, thought the rest of his reign should be but play, and the enjoying of a kingdom. Yet as a wise and watchful King, he would not neglect anything for his safety, thinking nevertheless to perform all things now rather as an exercise than as a labour. So he, being truly informed that the

²⁷ Those who received bishoprics had ample reward.

²⁸ *Annates* or *primatiae*, sums of money, equivalent in value to one year's income, which had to be paid by those newly appointed to benefices. The Pope claimed jurisdiction over all spiritual livings, but English kings had for centuries reserved the first-fruits to themselves: 'Thus, the more times the king shuffled the bishops around, the more first-fruits he could collect' (ed. Levy).

¹ As Spedding pointed out (*S*, vi.41), this diagnosis was Bacon's own; apparently a deduction from the delayed wedding, and what he interpreted as Henry's anti-Yorkist feelings.

northern parts² were not only affectionate to the house of York but particularly had been devoted to King Richard the Third, thought it would be a summer well spent to visit those parts, and by his presence and application of himself to reclaim* and rectify those humours.* But the King, in his account of peace and calms, did much over-cast* his fortunes; which proved for many years together full of broken* seas, tides, and tempests. For he was no sooner come to Lincoln, where he kept his Easter, but he received news that the Lord Lovel,³ Humphrey Stafford,⁴ and Thomas Stafford, who had formerly taken sanctuary at Colchester, were departed out of sanctuary, but to what place no man could tell. Which advertisement* the King despised, and continued his journey to York. At York there came fresh and more certain advertisement that the Lord Lovel was at hand with a great power of men, and that the Staffords were in arms in Worcestershire, and had made their approaches to the city of Worcester to assail it. The King, as a prince of great and profound judgement, was not much moved with it; for that he thought it was but a rag* or remnant* of Bosworth Field, and had nothing in it of the main party of the house of York. But he was more doubtful of the raising of forces to resist the rebels than of the resistance itself;⁵ for that he was in a core* of people whose affections he suspected. But the action enduring no delay, he did speedily levy* and send against the Lord Lovel to the number of three thousand men, ill armed but well assured* (being taken some few out of his own train, and the rest out of the tenants and followers of such as were safe to be trusted), under the conduct of the Duke of Bedford. And as his manner was to send his pardons rather before the sword than after, he gave commission to the Duke to proclaim pardon to all that would come* in: which the Duke, upon his approach to the Lord Lovel's camp, did perform.

And it fell* out as the King expected; the heralds were the great ordnance.⁶ For the Lord Lovel, upon proclamation of pardon,

² The north of England, especially Yorkshire.

³ Francis Viscount Lovel (1457-87), a supporter of Richard III who fought for him at Bosworth.

⁴ Who had also fought on Richard III's side.

⁵ Than that the rebels might easily be resisted.

⁶ Chief artillery (i.e., the heralds' proclamations of pardon were the most effective weapons).

mistrusting his men, fled into Lancashire, and lurking for a time with Sir Thomas Broughton, after sailed over into Flanders to the Lady Margaret.⁷ And his men, forsaken of their captain, did presently* submit themselves to the Duke. The Staffords likewise, and their forces, hearing what had happened to the Lord Lovel (in whose success their chief trust was), despaired and dispersed; the two brothers taking sanctuary at Colnham, a village near Abingdon; which place, upon view of their privilege in the King's bench,⁸ being judged no sufficient sanctuary for traitors, Humphrey was executed at Tyburn;⁹ and Thomas, as being led by his elder brother, was pardoned. So this rebellion proved but a blast*, and the King having by this journey purged a little the dregs and leaven* of the northern people, that were before in no good affection towards him, returned to London.

In September following, the Queen was delivered of her first son, whom the King (in honour of the British race, of which himself was) named Arthur, according to the name of that ancient worthy King of the Britons;¹⁰ in whose acts there is truth enough to make him famous, besides that which is fabulous. The child was strong and able, though he was born in the eighth month, which the physicians do prejudge.*

[Lambert Simnel's Imposture]

There followed this year [1486], being the second of the King's reign, a strange accident of state,¹ whereof the relations* which we have are so naked*, as they leave it scarce credible; not for the nature of it (for it hath fallen* out), but for the manner and circumstance of it, especially in the beginnings. Therefore we shall make

⁷ Duchess of Burgundy, sister to Edward IV, an enemy of the house of Lancaster, who constantly plotted against Henry VII.

⁸ After the judges in the court of the King's bench (which dealt with criminal matters and affairs affecting the King's interests) had decided that henceforth sanctuary was not pleadable in treason.

⁹ The place of execution for criminals and traitors.

¹⁰ The King (Henry Tudor) was Welsh, a race thought to be descended from the ancient Britons.

¹ Touching the state or country.

our judgement upon the things themselves, as they give light one to another, and (as we can) dig truth out of the mine.²

The King was green* in his estate*; and contrary to his own opinion and desert* both, was not without much hatred throughout the realm. The root of all was the discountenancing* of the house of York, which the general body of the realm still affected. This did alienate the hearts of the subjects from him daily more and more, especially when they saw that after his marriage, and after a son born, the King did nevertheless not so much as proceed to the coronation¹ of the Queen, not vouchsafing* her the honour of a matrimonial crown; for the coronation of her was not till almost two years after, when danger had taught him what to do. But much more, when it was spread abroad (whether by error or the cunning of malcontents) that the King had a purpose to put to death Edward Plantagenet closely* in the Tower: whose case was so nearly paralleled with that of Edward the Fourth's children, in respect of the blood, like age, and the very place of the Tower, as it did refresh* and reflect upon the King a most odious resemblance, as if he would be another King Richard. And all this time it was still whispered everywhere, that at least one of the children of Edward the Fourth was living. Which bruit* was cunningly fomented* by such as desired innovation.* Neither was the King's nature and customs greatly fit to disperse these mists; but contrariwise he had a fashion rather to create doubts than assurance. Thus was fuel prepared for the spark: the spark, that afterwards kindled such a fire and combustion, was at the first contemptible.*

There was a subtile* priest called Richard Simons, that lived in Oxford, and had to his pupil a baker's son named Lambert Simnel,⁴ of the age of some fifteen years; a comely youth, and well-favoured*, not without some extraordinary dignity and grace of aspect.* It came into this priest's fancy (hearing what men talked, and in hope to raise himself to some great bishoprick) to cause this lad to

² Bacon frequently quoted this saying, ascribed to Democritus, 'That truth did lie in profound pits, and when it was got, it needed much refining' (*S*, vii.162, also *V*, 21, 193).

¹ This took place on 25 November 1487. As Chrimes (*Henry VII*, pp. 66-7) points out, given that the Yorkist insurrection in support of Lambert Simnel was only ended by the battle of Stoke (16 June 1487), and that Prince Arthur was born on 19 September 1486, the coronation could hardly have been arranged much earlier.

⁴ Simnel (*fl.* 1472-1525), son of an Oxford cobbler and baker, was coached by Simons to impersonate Edward Plantagenet Earl of Warwick.

counterfeit and personate the second son of Edward the Fourth, supposed to be murdered; and afterward (for he changed his intention in the manage⁵) the Lord Edward Plantagenet, then prisoner in the Tower; and accordingly to frame* him and instruct him in the part he was to play. This is that which (as was touched* before) seemeth scarcely credible; not that a false person* should be assumed* to gain a kingdom, for it hath been seen in ancient and late* times; nor that it should come into the mind of such an abject fellow to enterprise so great a matter; for high conceits* do sometimes come streaming into the imaginations of base persons; especially when they are drunk with news and talk* of the people. But here is that which hath no appearance*; that this priest, being utterly unacquainted with the true person according to whose pattern he should shape his counterfeit, should think it possible for him to instruct his player, either in gesture and fashions, or in recounting past matters of his life and education, or in fit answers to questions, or the like, any ways to come near the resemblance of him whom he was to represent. For this lad was not to personate one that had been long before taken out of his cradle, or conveyed away in his infancy, known to few; but a youth that till the age almost of ten years had been brought up in a court where infinite eyes had been upon him. For King Edward, touched with remorse of his brother the Duke of Clarence's death, would not indeed restore his son (of whom we speak) to be Duke of Clarence, but yet created him Earl of Warwick, reviving his honour on the mother's side, and used him honourably during his time, though Richard the Third afterwards confined* him. So that it cannot be, but that some great person, that knew particularly and familiarly Edward Plantagenet, had a hand in the business, from whom the priest might take* his aim.

That which is most probable, out of the precedent and subsequent acts, is, that it was the Queen Dowager⁶ from whom this action had the principal source and motion. For certain it is, she was a busy* negotiating woman, and in her withdrawing-chamber* had the fortunate conspiracy for the King against King Richard the

⁵ While the plot was in progress.

⁶ Elizabeth Woodville (1437?-1492), widow of Edward IV, and mother of Henry's Queen. Other evidence suggests that her removal to the convent at Bermondsey was not due to suspicion (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 76).

Third been hatched; which the King knew, and remembered perhaps but too well; and [she] was at this time extremely discontent with the King, thinking her daughter (as the King handled the matter) not advanced* but depressed*; and none could hold the book⁷ so well to prompt and instruct this stage-play, as she could. Nevertheless it was not her meaning, nor no more was it the meaning of any of the better and sager* sort that favoured this enterprise and knew the secret, that this disguised idol* should possess the crown; but at his peril* to make way to the overthrow of the King; and that done, they had their several* hopes and ways.

That which doth chiefly fortify this conjecture is, that as soon as the matter brake* forth in any strength it was one of the King's first acts to cloister the Queen Dowager in the nunnery of Bermondsey, and to take away all her lands and estate; and this by a close* council, without any legal proceeding, upon far-fetched pretences – that she had delivered her two daughters out of sanctuary to King Richard, contrary to promise. Which proceeding being even at that time taxed* for rigorous and undue, both in matter and manner, makes it very probable there was some greater matter against her, which the King upon reason of policy and to avoid envy would not publish.* It is likewise no small argument that there was some secret in it and some suppressing of examinations*, for that the priest Simons himself after he was taken was never brought to execution; no, not so much as to public trial (as many clergymen were upon less treasons); but was only shut up close in a dungeon. Add to this that after the Earl of Lincoln (a principal person of the house of York) was slain in Stokefield, the King opened himself to some of his council, that he was sorry for the Earl's death, because by him (he said) he might have known the bottom of his danger.⁸

But to return to the narration itself. Simons did first instruct his scholar for the part of Richard Duke of York, second son to King Edward the Fourth; and this was at such time as it was voiced* that the King purposed to put to death Edward Plantagenet, prisoner in the Tower, whereat there was great murmur. But hearing soon after a general bruit* that Plantagenet had escaped out of the Tower, and thereby finding him so much beloved amongst the people, and such

⁷ As the prompter held the play-text during rehearsal and performance.

⁸ Learned the full extent of this dangerous plot.

rejoicing at his escape, the cunning priest changed his copy* and chose now Plantagenet to be the subject his pupil should personate, because he was more in the present speech and votes* of the people; and it pieced* better, and followed more close and handsomely* upon the bruit of Plantagenet's escape. But yet doubting* that there would be too near looking* and too much perspective* into his disguise, if he should shew it here in England; he thought good (after the manner of scenes in stage-plays and masks⁹) to shew it afar off; and therefore sailed with his scholar into Ireland, where the affection to the house of York was most in height. The King had been a little improvident in the matters of Ireland,¹⁰ and had not removed officers and counsellors, and put in their places, or at least intermingled, persons of whom he stood assured; as he should have done, since he knew the strong bent of that country towards the house of York, and that it was a ticklish* and unsettled state, more easy to receive distempers* and mutations than England was. But trusting to the reputation of his victories and successes in England, he thought he should have time enough to extend his cares afterwards to that second kingdom.

Wherefore through this neglect, upon the coming of Simons with his pretended Plantagenet into Ireland, all things were prepared for revolt and sedition*, almost as if they had been set and plotted beforehand. Simons's first address* was to the Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare and Deputy* of Ireland; before whose eyes he did cast such a mist (by his own insinuation, and by the carriage* of his youth, that expressed a natural princely behaviour) as, joined perhaps with some inward vapours of ambition and affection in the Earl's own mind, left him fully possessed* that it was the true Plantagenet. The Earl presently* communicated the matter with some of the nobles and others there, at the first secretly. But finding them of like affection to himself, he suffered it of purpose to vent* and pass abroad; because they thought it not safe to resolve*, till they had a taste of the people's inclination. But if the great ones were in forwardness*, the people were in fury*, entertaining this airy body or phantasm with incredible affection; partly out of their

* Some scenes in the masques used a painted backcloth to represent a building or landscape

¹⁰ Bacon's diagnosis of Henry having neglected to counteract the Yorkist dominance in Ireland is justified: cf. Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 73-9.

great devotion to the house of York, partly out of a proud humour in the nation to give a King to the realm of England. Neither did the party in this heat of affection much trouble themselves with the attainder* of George Duke of Clarence; having newly learned by the King's example that attainders do not interrupt the conveying of title to the crown. And as for the daughters of King Edward the Fourth, they thought King Richard had said enough for them,¹¹ and took them to be but as of the King's party, because they were in his power and at his disposing. So that with marvellous consent and applause, this counterfeit Plantagenet was brought with great solemnity to the castle of Dublin, and there saluted, served, and honoured as King; the boy becoming it well, and doing nothing that did bewray* the baseness of his condition. And within a few days after he was proclaimed King in Dublin, by the name of King Edward the Sixth; there being not a sword drawn in King Henry his quarrel.¹²

The King was much moved with this unexpected accident, when it came to his ears, both because it struck upon that string which ever he most feared,¹³ as also because it was stirred in such a place, where he could not with safety transfer his own person to suppress it. For partly through natural valour and partly through an universal suspicion (not knowing whom to trust) he was ever ready to wait* upon all his achievements in person. The King therefore first called his council together at the Charter-house at Sheen,¹⁴ which council was held with great secrecy, but the open decrees thereof, which presently* came abroad, were three.

The first was, that the Queen Dowager, for that she, contrary to her pact and agreement with those that had concluded* with her concerning the marriage of her daughter Elizabeth with King Henry, had nevertheless delivered her daughters out of sanctuary into King Richard's hands, should be cloistered in the nunnery of Bermondsey, and forfeit* all her lands and goods.

The next was, that Edward Plantagenet, then close prisoner in the Tower, should be, in the most public and notorious* manner

¹¹ Richard's example had shown that their claim was no insuperable impediment to Edward Plantagenet being the legitimate heir

¹² In support of the King. The 'coronation' took place on 24 May 1487.

¹³ That is, the legitimacy of his claim to the throne

¹⁴ Sheen (now Richmond) where Henry VII had a palace.

that could be devised, shewed unto the people: in part to discharge the King of the envy* of that opinion and bruit, how he had been put to death privily* in the Tower; but chiefly to make the people see the levity* and imposture* of the proceedings of Ireland, and that their Plantagenet was indeed but a puppet or a counterfeit.

The third was, that there should be again proclaimed a general pardon to all that would reveal their offences and submit themselves by a day; and that this pardon should be conceived in so ample and liberal a manner as no high-treason (no* not against the King's own person) should be excepted. Which though it might seem strange, yet was it not so to a wise King, that knew his greatest dangers were not from the least treasons, but from the greatest. These resolutions of the King and his council were immediately put in execution. And first, the Queen Dowager was put into the monastery of Bermondsey, and all her estate seized into the King's hands: whereat there was much wondering; that a weak woman, for the yielding to the menaces and promises of a tyrant,¹⁵ after such a distance of time (wherein the King had shown no displeasure nor alteration), but much more after so happy a marriage between the King and her daughter, blessed with issue male, should upon a sudden mutability* or disclosure* of the King's mind be so severely handled.

This lady was amongst the examples of great variety of fortune. She had first, from a distressed suitor¹⁶ and desolate widow, been taken to the marriage bed of a bachelor-King, the goodliest personage of his time; and even in his reign she had endured a strange eclipse, by the King's flight¹⁷ and temporary depriving from the crown. She was also very happy* in that she had by him fair issue, and continued his nuptial love (helping herself by some obsequious* bearing and dissembling* of his pleasures) to the very end. She was much affectionate to her own kindred,¹⁸ even unto faction*; which did stir great envy in the lords of the King's side, who counted her blood a disparagement* to be mingled with the King's. With which lords of the King's blood joined also the King's favourite the Lord

¹⁵ Richard III.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Woodville, then newly widowed, had appealed to Edward IV to have her dead husband's confiscated estate returned.

¹⁷ In 1470 Edward had to flee when Henry VI was briefly restored to the throne

¹⁸ Her relatives received many honours and promotions

Hastings; who, notwithstanding the King's great affection to him, was thought at times, through her malice and spleen*, not to be out of danger of falling. After her husband's death she was matter of tragedy, having lived to see her brother¹⁹ beheaded, and her two sons deposed from the crown, bastarded in their blood,²⁰ and cruelly murdered. All this while nevertheless she enjoyed her liberty, state, and fortunes. But afterwards again, upon the rise of the wheel, when she had a King to her son-in-law, and was made grandmother to a grandchild of the best sex, yet was she (upon dark and unknown reasons, and no less strange pretences) precipitated and banished the world into a nunnery; where it was almost thought dangerous to visit her or see her; and where not long after she ended her life;²¹ but was by the King's commandment buried with the King her husband at Windsor. She was foundress of Queen's College²² in Cambridge. For this act the King sustained great obloquy*, which nevertheless (besides the reason of state) was somewhat sweetened to him by a great confiscation.²³

About this time also, Edward Plantagenet was upon a Sunday brought throughout all the principal streets of London, to be seen of the people.²⁴ And having passed the view of the streets, was conducted to Paul's Church in solemn procession, where great store* of people were assembled. And it was provided also in good fashion, that divers of the nobility and others of quality* (especially of those that the King most suspected, and knew the person of Plantagenet best) had communication with the young gentleman by the way, and entertained him with speech and discourse, which did in effect mar the pageant in Ireland with the subjects here; at least with so many as out of error, and not out of malice, might be misled. Nevertheless in Ireland (where it was too late to go back) it wrought little or no effect. But contrariwise they turned the imposture upon the King; and gave out that the King, to defeat the true inheritor, and to mock the world and blind the eyes of simple men, had tricked up a boy in the likeness of Edward Plantagenet, and shewed

¹⁹ Lord Rivers, beheaded in 1483 by order of Richard Duke of Gloucester.

²⁰ Declared illegitimate.

²¹ In 1492.

²² Actually founded by Queen Margaret of Anjou in 1448, but refounded by Queen Elizabeth in 1465.

²³ The King seized her lands and goods.

²⁴ This took place in February 1487.

him to the people; not sparing to profane the ceremony* of a procession, the more to countenance* the fable.

The general pardon likewise near the same time came forth; and the King therewithal omitted no diligence in giving straight order for the keeping* of the ports; that fugitives, malcontents, or suspected persons might not pass over into Ireland and Flanders.

Meanwhile the rebels in Ireland had sent privy* messengers both into England and into Flanders, who in both places had wrought effects of no small importance. For in England they won to their party John Earl of Lincoln, son of John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, and of Elizabeth, King Edward the Fourth's eldest sister. This Earl was a man of great wit* and courage, and had his thoughts highly raised by hopes and expectations for a time.²⁵ For Richard the Third had a resolution*, out of his hatred to both his brethren, King Edward and the Duke of Clarence, and their lines* (having had his hand in both their bloods), to disable their issues upon false and incompetent* pretexts, the one of attainder*, the other of illegitimation; and to design this gentleman (in case himself should die without children) for inheritor of the crown. Neither was this unknown to the King (who had secretly an eye upon him): but the King having tasted of the envy of the people for his imprisonment of Edward Plantagenet, was doubtful* to heap up any more distastes of that kind by the imprisonment of de la Pole also; the rather thinking it policy* to conserve him as a corral unto the other. The Earl of Lincoln was induced to participate with the action of Ireland, not lightly upon the strength of the proceedings there, which was but a bubble; but upon letters from the Lady Margaret of Burgundy, in whose succours* and declaration for the enterprise there seemed to be a more solid foundation, both for reputation and forces. Neither did the Earl refrain* the business* for that he knew the pretended Plantagenet to be but an idol.* But contrariwise he was more glad it should be the false Plantagenet than the true; because the false being sure to fall away of himself, and the true to be made sure of by the King, it might open and pave a fair and prepared way to his own title. With this resolution he sailed secretly into Flanders, where was a little before arrived the Lord Lovel,

²⁵ For a long time John Earl of Lincoln (c.1462-87), a prominent Yorkist, the nephew and designated heir of Richard III, had ostensibly made his peace with Henry at his accession

leaving a correspondence²⁶ here in England with Sir Thomas Broughton, a man of great power and dependencies in Lancashire.

For before this time, when the pretended Plantagenet was first received in Ireland, secret messengers had been also sent to the Lady Margaret, advertising her what had passed in Ireland, imploring succours in an enterprise (as they said) so pious and just, and that God had so miraculously prospered in the beginning thereof; and making offer that all things should be guided by her will and direction, as the sovereign patroness and protectress of the enterprise. Margaret was second sister to King Edward the Fourth, and had been second wife to Charles surnamed the Hardy, Duke of Burgundy. By whom having no children of her own, she did with singular care and tenderness intend* the education of Philip and Margaret, grandchildren to her former husband,²⁷ which won her great love and authority among the Dutch. This Princess (having the spirit of a man and malice of a woman) abounding in treasure by the greatness of her dower* and her provident government, and being childless and without any nearer care, made it her design and enterprise to see the Majesty Royal of England once again replaced in her house; and had set up King Henry as a mark* at whose overthrow all her actions should aim and shoot; insomuch as all the counsels of his succeeding troubles came chiefly out of that quiver. And she bare such a mortal hatred to the house of Lancaster and personally to the King, as she was no ways mollified by the conjunction of the houses in her niece's marriage; but rather hated her niece, as the means of the King's ascent to the crown and assurance therein. Wherefore with great violence of affection she embraced this overture.*

And upon counsel taken with the Earl of Lincoln and the Lord Lovel, and some other of the party, it was resolved with all speed, the two lords assisted with a regiment of two thousand Almain*, being choice* and veteran bands*, under the command of Martin Swart²⁸ (a valiant and experimented* captain) should pass over into Ireland to the new King; hoping that when the action should have the face of a received and settled regality* (with such a second* person as the Earl of Lincoln, and the conjunction and reputation

²⁶ Arranging a means of communication.

²⁷ In fact, the children were born of Mary, Charles's only daughter by his first wife.

²⁸ Martin Schwartz, the redoubtable leader of the German mercenaries.

of foreign succours), the fame of it would embolden* and prepare all the party of the confederates and malcontents within the realm of England to give them assistance when they should come over there. And for the person of the counterfeit, it was agreed that if all things succeeded well he should be put* down, and the true Plantagenet received; wherein nevertheless the Earl of Lincoln had his particular hopes.

After they were come into Ireland (and that the party took courage by seeing themselves together in a body) they grew very confident of success; conceiving and discoursing amongst themselves, that they went in upon far better cards* to overthrow King Henry, than King Henry had to overthrow King Richard: and that if there were not a sword drawn against them in Ireland, it was a sign the swords in England would be soon sheathed* or beaten down. And first, for a bravery* upon this accession of power, they crowned their new King in the cathedral church of Dublin, who formerly had been but proclaimed* only; and then sat in council what should further be done. At which council though it were propounded* by some that it were the best way to establish themselves first in Ireland, and to make that the seat of the war, and to draw King Henry thither in person, by whose absence they thought there would be great alterations* and commotions in England; yet because the kingdom there was poor, and they should not be able to keep their army together, nor pay their German soldiers; and for that also the sway* of the Irishmen and generally of the men of war, which (as in such cases of popular tumults is usual) did in effect govern their leaders, was eager and in affection* to make their fortunes upon England; it was concluded with all possible speed to transport their forces into England.

The King in the mean time, who at the first when he heard what was done in Ireland, though it troubled him, yet thought he should be well enough able to scatter the Irish as a flight of birds, and rattle away this swarm of bees with their King; when he heard afterwards that the Earl of Lincoln was embarked in the action, and that the Lady Margaret was declared for it, he apprehended the danger in a true degree as it was; and saw plainly that his kingdom must again be put to the stake*, and that he must fight for it. And first he did conceive*, before he understood of the Earl of Lincoln's sailing into Ireland out of Flanders, that he should be assailed both upon the

east parts of the kingdom of England by some impression* from Flanders, and upon the north-west out of Ireland: and therefore having ordered musters* to be made in both parts, and having provisionally designed* two generals, Jasper Earl of Bedford, and John Earl of Oxford (meaning himself also to go in person where the affairs should most require it), and nevertheless not expecting any actual invasion at that time, the winter being far on, he took his journey himself towards Suffolk and Norfolk, for the confirming* of those parts. And being come to St Edmondsbury, he understood that Thomas Marquis of Dorset (who had been one of the pledges* in France) was hasting towards him to purge himself of some accusations which had been made against him. But the King, though he kept an ear for²⁹ him, yet was the time so doubtful* that he sent the Earl of Oxford to meet him and forthwith to carry him to the Tower, with a fair message nevertheless that he should bear that disgrace with patience; for that the King meant not his hurt, but only to preserve him from doing hurt either to the King's service or to himself; and that the King should always be able (when he had cleared himself) to make him reparation.*

From St Edmondsbury he went to Norwich, where he kept his Christmas. And from thence he went (in a manner of pilgrimage) to Walsingham, where he visited our Lady's church, famous for miracles, and made his prayers and vows for his help and deliverance. And from thence he returned by Cambridge to London. Not long after, the rebels with their King (under the leading of the Earl of Lincoln, the Earl of Kildare, the Lord Lovel, and Colonel Swart) landed at Fouldrey in Lancashire, whither there repaired to them Sir Thomas Broughton, with some small company of English. The King by that time (knowing now the storm would not divide but fall in one place) had levied forces* in good number; and in person (taking with him his two designed generals, the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Oxford) was come on his way towards them as far as Coventry, whence he sent forth a troop of light horsemen for discovery,³⁰ and to intercept* some stragglers of the enemies, by whom he might the better understand the particulars of their progress and purposes; which was accordingly done; though the King otherways was not without intelligence from espials* in the camp.

²⁹ Was well disposed towards.

³⁰ To spy out the enemy's position.

The rebels took their way towards York without spoiling the country or any act of hostility, the better to put themselves into favour of the people and to personate their King³¹ (who no doubt out of a princely feeling was sparing* and compassionate towards his subjects). But their snow-ball did not gather as it went. For the people came not in to them; neither did any rise or declare themselves in other parts of the kingdom for them; which was caused partly by the good taste that the King had given his people of his government, joined with the reputation of his felicity*; and partly for that it was an odious thing to the people of England to have a King brought in to them upon the shoulders of Irish and Dutch, of which their army was in substance compounded. Neither was it a thing done with any great judgement on the party of the rebels, for them to take their way towards York; considering that howsoever* those parts had formerly been a nursery of their friends, yet it was there where the Lord Lovel had so lately disbanded*; and where the King's presence had a little before qualified* discontents. The Earl of Lincoln, deceived of his hopes of the country's concourse* unto him (in which case he would have temporized*) and seeing the business past* retreat, resolved to make* on where the King was, and to give him battle; and thereupon marched towards Newark, thinking to have surprised the town. But the King was somewhat before this time come to Nottingham, where he called a council of war, at which was consulted whether it were best to protract* time or speedily to set upon the rebels. In which council the King himself (whose continual vigilance did suck* in sometimes causeless suspicions which few else knew) inclined to the accelerating a battle. But this was presently* put out of doubt, by the great aids that came in to him in the instant of this consultation, partly upon missives* and partly voluntaries* from many parts of the kingdom.

The principal persons that came then to the King's aid were the Earl of Shrewsbury and the Lord Strange, of the nobility, and of knights and gentlemen to the number of at least three-score and ten persons, with their companies; making in the whole at the least six thousand fighting men, besides the forces that were with the King

³¹ Create a good impression concerning their King (Simnel) – since a real king would not pillage his own people

before. Whereupon the King, finding his army so bravely reinforced, and a great alacrity in all his men to fight, he was confirmed in his former resolution, and marched speedily, so as he put himself between the enemies' camp and Newark; being loth their army should get the commodity* of that town. The Earl, nothing dismayed, came forwards that day unto a little village called Stoke, and there encamped that night, upon the brow or hanging of a hill. The King the next day³² presented him battle upon the plain (the fields there being open and champaign*). The Earl courageously came down and joined battle with him.

Concerning which battle the relations* that are left unto us are so naked and negligent (though it be an action of so recent memory) as they rather declare the success of the day than the manner of the fight. They say that the King divided his army into three battails*, whereof the vant-guard* only, well strengthened with wings* came to fight; that the fight was fierce and obstinate, and lasted three hours before the victory inclined either way, save that judgement might be made by that the King's vant-guard of itself maintained fight against the whole power of the enemies (the other two battails remaining out of action), what the success was like to be in the end; that Martin Swart with his Germans performed bravely, and so did those few English that were on that side; neither did the Irish fail in courage or fierceness, but being almost naked men, only armed with darts* and skeins*, it was rather an execution than a fight upon them; insomuch as the furious slaughter of them was a great discouragement and appalment* to the rest; that there died upon the place all the chieftains, that is, the Earl of Lincoln, the Earl of Kildare, Francis Lord Lovel, Martin Swart, and Sir Thomas Broughton, all making* good the fight without any ground given. Only of the Lord Lovel there went a report that he fled, and swam over Trent on horseback, but could not recover* the further side, by reason of the steepness of the bank, and so was drowned in the river. But another report leaves him not there, but that he lived long after in a cave or vault. The number that was slain in the field was of the enemies' part four thousand at the least, and of the King's part one half of his vant-guard, besides many hurt, but none of name. There were taken prisoners amongst others the counterfeit

³² 16 June 1487.

Plantagenet, now Lambert Simmel again, and the crafty priest his tutor. For Lambert, the King would not take his life, both out of magnanimity (taking him but as an image of wax that others had tempered and moulded), and likewise out of wisdom; thinking that if he suffered death he would be forgotten too soon, but being kept alive he would be a continual spectacle, and a kind of remedy against the like enchantments* of people in time to come. For which cause he was taken into service in his court to a base office in his kitchen; so that (in a kind of *mattacina** of human fortune) he turned a broach* that had worn a crown; whereas fortune commonly doth not bring in a comedy or farce after a tragedy. And afterwards he was preferred* to be one of the King's falconers. As to the priest, he was committed close prisoner, and heard of no more; the King loving to seal* up his own dangers.

After the battle the King went to Lincoln, where he caused supplications and thanksgivings to be made for his deliverance and victory. And that his devotions might go round in circle, he sent his banner to be offered to our Lady of Walsingham, where before he made his vows.

And thus delivered of this so strange an engine* and new invention of fortune, he returned to his former confidence of mind, thinking now that all his misfortunes had come at once. But it fell unto him according to the speech of the common people in the beginning of his reign, that said, 'It was a token he should reign in labour, because his reign began with a sickness of sweat.' But howsoever* the King thought himself now in the haven*, yet such was his wisdom as his confidence did seldom darken his foresight, especially in things near-hand; and therefore, awakened by so fresh and unexpected dangers, he entered into due consideration as well how to weed out the partakers of the former rebellion, as to kill the seeds of the like in time to come: and withal* to take away all shelters and harbours for discontented persons, where they might hatch and foster rebellions which afterwards might gather strength and motion.

And first he did yet again make a progress from Lincoln to the northern parts, though it were (indeed) rather an itinerary circuit³³ of justice than a progress.* For all along as he went, with much

³³ Regular route taken by judges holding assizes.

severity and strict inquisition, partly by martial law³⁴ and partly by commission,³⁵ were punished the adherents and aiders of the late rebels; not all by death (for the field had drawn much blood), but by fines and ransoms, which spared life and raised treasure. Amongst other crimes of this nature, there was a diligent inquiry made of such as had raised and dispersed a bruit and rumour (a little before the field fought), that the rebels had the day and that the King's army was overthrown, and the King fled, whereby it was supposed that many succours* which otherwise would have come unto the King were cunningly put off and kept back; which charge and accusation, though it had some ground, yet it was industriously embraced and put* on by divers*, who (having been in themselves not the best affected to the King's part, nor forward to come to his aid) were glad to apprehend* this colour* to cover their neglect and coldness under the pretence of such discouragements. Which cunning nevertheless the King would not understand,³⁶ though he lodged* it and noted it in some particulars, as his manner was.

[Coronation of the Queen, 25 November 1487]

But for the extirpating* of the roots and causes of the like commotions in time to come, the King began to find where his shoe did wring him; and that it was his depressing of the house of York that did rankle* and fester* the affections of his people. And therefore, being now too wise to disdain perils any longer, and willing to give some contentment in that kind (at least in ceremony), he resolved at last to proceed to the coronation of his Queen. And therefore, at his coming to London, where he entered in state and in a kind of triumph, and celebrated his victory with two days of devotion (for the first day he repaired to Paul's, and had the hymn of *Te Deum* sung, and the morrow after he went in procession, and heard the sermon at the Cross¹), the Queen was with great solemnity crowned at Westminster, the twenty-fifth of November, in the third year of his reign, which was about two years after the marriage (like an old christening that had stayed* long for godfathers); which strange and

³⁴ Summary judgements, with military rulers granted special legal powers.

³⁵ By normal course of justice, appointing judges to try offenders.

³⁶ Take note of (publicly acknowledge).

¹ St Paul's Cross (see above, p. 10).

unusual distance of time made it subject to every man's note that it was an act against his stomach*, and put upon him by necessity and reason of state.² Soon after, to shew that it was now fair weather again, and that the imprisonment of Thomas Marquis Dorset was rather upon suspicion of the time than of the man, he the said Marquis was set at liberty, without examination or other circumstance.

At that time also the King sent an ambassador unto Pope Innocent,³ signifying unto him this his marriage; and that now like another Æneas⁴ he had passed through the floods of his former troubles and travails and was arrived unto a safe haven; and thanking his Holiness that he had honoured the celebration of his marriage with the presence of his ambassador, and offering both his person and the forces of his kingdom upon all occasions to do him service.

The ambassador, making his oration to the Pope in the presence of the cardinals, did so magnify the King and Queen as was enough to glut the hearers. But then he did again so extol and deify the Pope as made all that he had said in praise of his master and mistress seem temperate and passable.* But he was very honourably entertained and extremely much made* on by the Pope, who knowing himself to be lazy and unprofitable⁵ to the Christian world, was wonderful glad to hear that there were such echoes of him sounding in remote parts. He obtained also of the Pope a very just and honourable Bull, qualifying* the privileges of sanctuary (wherewith the King had been extremely galled) in three points.

The first, that if any sanctuary-man⁶ did by night or otherwise get out of sanctuary privily* and commit mischief and trespass, and then come in again, he should leese* the benefit of sanctuary for ever after.

² 'Ragione di stato', the (often expedient) claim that the needs of the state as a whole had precedence over law and ethics.

³ The Pope had granted a dispensation for the marriage in January 1486 (since Elizabeth and Henry were related in the fourth degree of kinship: Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 65-6).

⁴ The hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*, who arrived in Italy after many storms and obstacles.

⁵ The pontificate of Innocent VIII was notoriously corrupt, turning a blind eye to all manner of crime.

⁶ One guilty of a capital crime, guaranteed safety while remaining within the bounds of an accepted sanctuary (usually a church).

The second, that howsoever the person of the sanctuary-man was protected from his creditors, yet his goods out of sanctuary should not.

The third, that if any took sanctuary for case of treason, the King might appoint him keepers⁷ to look* to him in sanctuary.

The King also, for the better securing of his estate against mutinous and malcontented subjects (whereof he saw the realm was full) who might have their refuge into Scotland (which was not under key as the ports were), for that cause, rather than for any doubt of hostility from those parts, before his coming to London, when he was at Newcastle, had sent a solemn ambassage* unto James the Third, King of Scotland, to treat and conclude a peace with him. The ambassadors were Richard Fox, Bishop of Exeter, and Sir Richard Edgcombe, comptroller* of the King's house*, who were honourably received and entertained there. But the King of Scotland, labouring of the same disease that King Henry did (though more mortal as afterwards appeared), that is, discontented subjects apt to rise* and raise tumult, although in his own affection* he did much desire to make a peace with the King, yet finding his nobles averse and not daring to displease them, concluded only a truce for seven years;⁸ giving nevertheless promise in private that it should be renewed from time to time during the two Kings' lives.

[Foreign Affairs: Brittany and France, 1489-90]

Hitherto the King had been exercised in settling his affairs at home. But about this time brake forth an occasion that drew him to look abroad and to hearken* to foreign business. Charles the Eighth, the French King, by the virtue and good fortune of his two immediate predecessors, Charles the Seventh his grandfather and Lewis the Eleventh his father, received the kingdom of France in more flourishing and spread* estate than it had been of many years before; being redintegrate in those principal members¹ which anciently had been portions of the crown of France, and were after dissevered, so as they remained only in homage and not in sover-

⁷ Appoint for him (the King's self), to keep surveillance.

⁸ In fact three, from 1486 to 1489. James III was killed at the battle of Sauchieburn, 11 June 1488, fighting the factious Scottish nobles.

¹ Having reincorporated those principal territories.

eignty, being governed by absolute princes² of their own; Anjou, Normandy, Provence, and Burgundy. There remained only Brittany to be re-united, and so the monarchy of France to be reduced* to the ancient terms* and bounds.*

King Charles was not a little inflamed with an ambition to re-purchase* and re-annex that duchy;³ which his ambition was a wise and well-weighed ambition, not like unto the ambitions of his succeeding enterprises of Italy.⁴ For at that time, being newly come to the crown, he was somewhat guided by his father's counsels (counsels not counsellors, for his father was his own counsel, and had few able men about him); and that King (he knew well) had ever distasted* the designs of Italy, and in particular had an eye upon Brittany. There were many circumstances that did feed the ambition of Charles with pregnant and apparent hopes of success. The Duke of Brittany old, and entered into a lethargy*, and served with mercenary counsellors, father of two only daughters, the one sickly and not like* to continue. King Charles himself in the flower of his age,⁵ and the subjects of France at that time well trained for war, both for leaders and soldiers (men of service being not yet worn* out since the wars of Lewis against Burgundy). He found himself also in peace with all his neighbour princes. As for those that might oppose to his enterprise: Maximilian, King of the Romans, his rival in the same desires (as well for the duchy as the daughter), feeble in means; and King Henry of England, as well somewhat obnoxious* to him for his favours and benefits, as busied in his particular troubles at home. There was also a fair and specious occasion offered him to hide his ambition and to justify his warring upon Brittany; for that the Duke had received and succoured Lewis Duke of Orleans and others of the French nobility, which had taken arms against their King.

Wherefore King Charles, being resolved upon that war, knew well he could not receive any opposition so potent as if⁶ King Henry should either upon policy of state in preventing the growing great-

² Governing in their own right.

³ Brittany. He reclaimed it for France in 1492.

⁴ His invasion of Italy in September 1494.

⁵ He was then eighteen.

⁶ As would ensue if.

ness of France, or upon gratitude unto the Duke of Brittany for his former favours in the time of his distress,⁷ espouse that quarrel and declare himself in aid of the Duke. Therefore he no sooner heard that King Henry was settled by his victory, but forthwith he sent ambassadors unto him to pray his assistance, or at least that he would stand neutral. Which ambassadors found the King at Leicester, and delivered their ambassage to this effect. They first imparted unto the King the success that their master had had a little before against Maximilian in recovery of certain towns from him; which was done in a kind of privacy and inwardness* towards the King; as if the French King did not esteem him for an outward or formal confederate*, but as one that had part in his affections and fortunes, and with whom he took pleasure to communicate his business.

After this compliment and some gratulation* for the King's victory, they fell to their errand: declaring to the King that their master was enforced to enter into a just and necessary war with the Duke of Brittany, for that he had received and succoured those that were traitors and declared enemies unto his⁸ person and state; that they were no mean distressed and calamitous* persons that fled to him for refuge, but of so great quality* as it was apparent that they came not thither to protect their own fortune, but to infest* and invade his; the head of them being the Duke of Orleans, the first Prince of the blood and the second person of France. That therefore rightly to understand it, it was rather on their master's part a defensive war than an offensive, as that that could not be omitted or forborne* if he tendered* the conservation of his own estate; and that it was not the first blow that made the war invasive* (for that no wise Prince would stay* for), but the first provocation, or at least the first preparation; nay that this war was rather a suppression of rebels than a war with a just* enemy; where the case is, that his subjects traitors* are received by the Duke of Brittany his homager.* That King Henry knew well what went upon it in example,⁹ if neighbour Princes should patronize* and comfort* rebels against the law of nations and of leagues; nevertheless that their master was not

⁷ The fourteen years of exile in Brittany. Charles VIII had given Henry refuge in 1484, when he managed to escape treacherous capture in Brittany, and had loaned him money for his victorious campaign against Richard III

⁸ The French King's.

⁹ How much evil would come of such an example.

ignorant that the King had been beholden to the Duke of Brittany in his adversity, as on the other side they knew he would not forget also the readiness of their King in aiding him when the Duke of Brittany or his mercenary counsellors failed him, and would have betrayed him; and that there was a great difference between the courtesies received from their master and the Duke of Brittany, for that the Duke's might have ends of utility and bargain, whereas their master's could not have proceeded but out of entire affection; for that if it had been measured by a politic line,¹⁰ it had been better for his affairs that a tyrant should have reigned in England, troubled and hated, than such a Prince¹¹ whose virtues could not fail to make him great and potent, whensoever he was comen to be master of his affairs. But howsoever it stood for the point of obligation¹² which the King might owe to the Duke of Brittany, yet their master was well assured it would not divert King Henry of England from doing that that was just, nor ever embark him in so ill-grounded a quarrel.

Therefore since this war which their master was now to make was but to deliver himself from imminent dangers, their King hoped the King would shew the like affection to the conservation of their master's estate, as their master had (when time* was) shewed to the King's acquisition of his kingdom. At the least that, according to the inclination which the King had ever professed of peace, he would look on and stand neutral; for that their master could not with reason press him to undertake part in the war, being so newly settled and recovered from intestine seditions. But touching the mystery* of re-annexing of the duchy of Brittany to the crown of France, either by war or by marriage with the daughter of Brittany, the ambassadors bare aloof from it as from a rock, knowing that it made* most against them; and therefore by all means declined any mention thereof, but contrariwise interlaced in their conference with the King the assured purpose of their master to match with the daughter of Maximilian; and entertained the King also with some wandering* discourses of their King's purpose to recover by arms his right to the kingdom of Naples, by an expedition in person; all to remove the King from all jealousy* of any design in these

¹⁰ Had the French King's attitude been dictated solely by political considerations.

¹¹ King Henry; the tyrant being Richard III.

¹² Under whatever degree of obligation

hither parts¹³ upon Brittany, otherwise than for quenching of the fire which he feared might be kindled in his own estate.¹⁴

The King, after advice taken with his council, made answer to the ambassadors. And first returned their compliment, showing he was right glad of the French King's reception* of those towns from Maximilian. Then he familiarly related some particular passages of his own adventures and victory passed. As to the business of Brittany, the King answered in few words, that the French King and the Duke of Brittany were the two persons to whom he was most obliged of all men; and that he should think himself very unhappy if things should go so between them as he should not be able to acquit himself in gratitude towards them both; and that there was no means for him, as a Christian King and a common friend to them, to satisfy all obligations both to God and man, but to offer himself for a mediator of an accord and peace between them; by which course he doubted not but their King's estate and honour both would be preserved with more safety and less envy than by a war; and that he would spare no cost or pains, no if it were to go¹⁵ on pilgrimage, for so good an effect; and concluded that in this great affair, which he took so much to heart, he would express himself more fully by an ambassage, which he would speedily dispatch unto the French King for that purpose. And in this sort the French ambassadors were dismissed: the King avoiding to understand* any thing touching the re-annexing of Brittany, as the ambassadors had avoided to mention it; save that he gave a little touch of it in the word 'envy'. And so it was that the King was neither so shallow nor so ill advertised* as not to perceive the intention of the French for the investing himself of Brittany.¹⁶ But first, he was utterly unwilling (howsoever he gave out) to enter into a war with France. A fame* of a war he liked well, but not an achievement; for the one he thought would make him richer, and the other poorer; and he was possessed with many secret fears¹⁷ touching his own people; which he was therefore loth to arm, and put weapons into their hands. Yet notwithstanding, as a prudent and courageous

¹³ Those nearest to England.

¹⁴ That is, dangerous conspiracies in France.

¹⁵ Even if it meant going.

¹⁶ Henry realized that Charles was intent on reclaiming Brittany for France.

¹⁷ Of rebellion in Ireland.

Prince, he was not so averse from a war, but that he was resolved to choose it rather than to have Brittany carried* by France; being so great and opulent a duchy, and situate so opportunely to annoy England, either for coast or trade.¹⁸ But the King's hopes were, that partly by negligence, commonly imputed to the French (especially in the court of a young King¹⁹), and partly by the native power of Brittany itself, which was not small; but chiefly in respect of the great party* that the Duke of Orleans had in the kingdom of France, and thereby means to stir up civil troubles to divert the French King from the enterprise of Brittany; and lastly in regard of the power of Maximilian, who was corival to the French King in that pursuit, the enterprise would either bow to a peace or break in itself. In all which the King measured and valued things amiss, as afterwards appeared.

He sent therefore forthwith to the French King, Christopher Urswick²⁰ his chaplain, a person by him much trusted and employed; choosing him the rather because he was a churchman*, as best sorting* with an embassy of pacification; and giving him also a commission that if the French King consented to treat, he should thence repair* to the Duke of Brittany and ripen the treaty on both parts. Urswick made declaration to the French King much to the purpose of the King's answer to the French ambassadors here, instilling also tenderly some overture* of receiving to grace the Duke of Orleans, and some taste* of conditions of accord. But the French King on the other side proceeded not sincerely, but with a great deal of art and dissimulation in this treaty, having for his end to gain time, and so put off the English succours, under hope of peace, till he had got good footing in Brittany by force of arms. Wherefore he answered the ambassador, that he would put himself into the King's hands, and make him arbiter of the peace; and willingly consented that the ambassadors should straightways pass into Brittany to signify this his consent, and to know the Duke's mind likewise; well foreseeing that the Duke of Orleans, by whom the Duke of Brittany was wholly led, taking himself to be upon terms

¹⁸ Either by means of war or by blocking commerce.

¹⁹ Charles VIII, who had acceded to the throne in 1483 at the age of thirteen, was now eighteen, and an invalid

²⁰ Urswick, a loyal servant from the exile years, became the King's almoner, and dean of York.

irreconcilable with him,²¹ would admit of no treaty of peace; whereby he should in* one both generally abroad veil over his ambition, and win the reputation of just and moderate proceedings; and should withal* endear himself in the affections of the King of England, as one that had committed all to his will; nay and (which was yet more fine*) make faith in him²² that although he went on with the war, yet it should be but with his sword in his hand to bend the stiffness of the other party to accept of peace; and so the King should take no umbrage* of his arming and prosecution,²³ but the treaty to be kept on foot²⁴ to the very last instant, till he were master of the field. Which grounds being by the French King wisely laid, all things fell out as he expected. For when the English ambassador came to the court of Brittany, the Duke was then scarcely perfect²⁵ in his memory, and all things were directed by the Duke of Orleans; who gave audience to the chaplin Urswick, and upon his ambassage delivered made answer in somewhat high terms: that the Duke of Brittany having been an host and a kind of parent or foster-father to the King in his tenderness of age and weakness of fortune, did look for at this time from King Henry (the renowned King of England) rather brave troops for his succours than a vain treaty of peace. And if the King could forget the good offices of the Duke done unto him aforetime, yet he knew well he would in his wisdom consider of the future, how much it imported his own safety and reputation both in foreign parts and with his own people, not to suffer Brittany (the old confederates of England) to be swallowed up by France, and so many good ports and strong towns upon the coast be in the command of so potent a neighbour King and so ancient an enemy; and therefore humbly desired the King to think of this business as his own: and therewith brake off, and denied any farther conference for treaty.

Urswick returned first to the French King, and related to him what had passed. Who, finding things to sort to his desire, took hold of them;²⁶ and said, that the ambassador might perceive now

²¹ The French King.

²² Make Henry believe.

²³ Prosecuting the war.

²⁴ That negotiations would be prolonged.

²⁵ Much decayed, *non compos mentis*.

²⁶ Happening according to his wish, seized the opportunity.

that which he for his part partly imagined before; that considering in what hands the Duke of Brittany was, there would be no peace but by a mixed treaty* of force and persuasion; and therefore he would go on with the one, and desired the King not to desist from the other;²⁷ but for his own part, he did faithfully promise to be still in the King's power, to rule him²⁸ in the matter of peace. This was accordingly represented unto the King by Urswick at his return, and in such a fashion as if the treaty were in no sort desperate*, but rather stayed for a better hour, till the hammer had wrought and beat the party of Brittany more pliant; whereupon there passed continually packets* and despatches between the two Kings, from the one out of desire, and from the other out of dissimulation about the negotiation of peace.

The French King meanwhile invaded Brittany with great forces, and distressed* the city of Nantes with a strait* siege, and (as one who, though he had no great judgement, yet had that, that he could dissemble home*) the more he did urge the prosecution of the war, the more he did at the same time urge the solicitation of the peace; insomuch as during the siege of Nantes, after many letters and particular messages, the better to maintain his dissimulation and to refresh* the treaty, he sent Bernard Daubigny, a person of good quality, to the King, earnestly to desire him to make an end of the business howsoever. The King was no less ready to revive and quicken the treaty; and thereupon sent three commissioners, the Abbot of Abingdon, Sir Richard Tunstall, and Chaplain Urswick formerly employed, to do their utmost endeavour to manage the treaty roundly* and strongly.

About this time the Lord Woodville (uncle to the Queen), a valiant gentleman and desirous of honour, sued to the King that he might raise some power of voluntaries* under-hand*, and without licence or passport (wherein the King might any ways appear*) go to the aid of the Duke of Brittany. The King denied his request, or at least seemed so to do, and laid strait commandment upon him that he should not stir; for that the King thought his honour would suffer therein, during a treaty to better a party.²⁹ Nevertheless this lord (either being unruly, or out of conceit* that the King would

²⁷ Charles would use force, Henry persuasion.

²⁸ That he (Henry) might rule him (Charles).

²⁹ To favour one of the parties.

not inwardly dislike that which he would not openly avow), sailed secretly over into the Isle of Wight, whereof he was governor, and levied a fair troop of four hundred men, and with them passed over into Brittany and joined himself with the Duke's forces. The news whereof, when it came to the French court, put divers young bloods into such a fury as the English ambassadors were not without peril to be outraged.* But the French King, both to preserve the privilege of ambassadors,³⁰ and being conscious to himself that in the business of peace he himself was the greater dissembler of the two, forbade all injuries of fact* or word against their persons or followers. And presently* came an agent from the King to purge* himself touching the Lord Woodville's going over, using for a principal argument to demonstrate that it was without his privity*, for that the troops were so small as neither had the face of a succour by authority, nor could much advance the Breton affairs. To which message, although the French King gave no full credit, yet he made fair weather³¹ with the King, and seemed satisfied.

Soon after the English ambassadors returned, having two of them been likewise with the Duke of Brittany and found things in no other terms than they were before. Upon their return they informed the King of the state of the affairs, and how far the French King was from any true meaning of peace, and therefore he was now to advise* of some other course. Neither was the King himself led all this while with credulity merely, as was generally supposed. But his error was not so much facility of belief as an ill-measuring of the forces of the other party. For (as was partly touched before) the King had cast* the business thus with himself. He took it for granted in his own judgement that the war of Brittany, in respect of the strength of the towns and of the party,³² could not speedily come to a period.* For he conceived that the councils of a war that was undertaken by the French King (then childless³³) against an heir apparent³⁴ of France, would be very faint and slow; and besides, that it was not possible but that the state of France should be embroiled with some troubles and alterations in favour of the Duke

³⁰ To be safe from violence during their embassy.

³¹ Replied in friendly terms

³² Defending forces.

³³ Charles VIII died without issue.

³⁴ The Duke of Orleans, opposed to Charles, who became King Louis XII in 1498.

of Orleans. He conceived likewise that Maximilian, King of the Romans, was a Prince warlike and potent, who he made account would give succours to the Bretons roundly.* So then, judging it would be a work of time, he laid his plot how he might best make use of that time for his own affairs. Wherein first he thought to make his vantage* upon his parliament, knowing that they being affectionate unto the quarrel of Brittany³⁵ would give treasure largely. Which treasure, as a noise of war might draw forth, so a peace succeeding might coffer* up. And because he knew his people were hot upon the business, he chose rather to seem to be deceived and lulled asleep by the French than to be backward in himself; considering his subjects were not so fully capable* of the reasons* of state which made him hold back.

Wherefore, to all these purposes he saw no other expedient than to set and keep on foot a continual treaty of peace, laying it down and taking it up again as the occurrence required.³⁶ Besides, he had in consideration the point of honour, in bearing the blessed person of a pacificator.³⁷ He thought likewise to make use of the envy that the French King met with by occasion of this war of Brittany, in strengthening himself with new alliances; as namely that of Ferdinando of Spain, with whom he had ever a consent* (even in nature and customs); and likewise with Maximilian, who was particularly interested.³⁸ So that in substance he promised himself money, honour, friends, and peace in the end. But those things were too fine* to be fortunate, and succeed in all parts; for that great affairs are commonly too rough and stubborn to be wrought upon by the finer edges or points of wit. The King was likewise deceived in his two main grounds. For although he had reason to conceive that the council of France would be wary to put the King into a war against the heir apparent of France, yet he did not consider that Charles was not guided by any of the principal of the blood or nobility,³⁹ but by mean men, who would make it their master-piece of credit and favour to give venturous counsels which no great or wise man

³⁵ Well disposed towards, and anxious to help Brittany in her quarrel with France.

³⁶ A temporary truce with France was signed in July 1488.

³⁷ 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God' Matt.

5 9

³⁸ Especially involved, being betrothed to Anne, daughter of the Duke of Brittany

³⁹ Leading noblemen.

durst or would.⁴⁰ And for Maximilian, he was thought then a greater matter than he was, his unstable and necessitous courses being not then known.

After consultation with the ambassadors, who brought him no other news than he expected before (though he would not seem to know it till then), he presently* summoned his parliament,⁴¹ and in open parliament propounded the cause of Brittany to both houses by his chancellor Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who spake to this effect.

'My lords and masters, the King's Grace, our Sovereign Lord, hath commanded me to declare unto you the causes that have moved him at this time to summon this his parliament; which I shall do in few words; craving pardon of his Grace and you all, if I perform it not as I would.*

'His Grace doth first of all let you know that he retaineth in thankful memory the love and loyalty shewed to him by you at your last meeting, in establishment of his royalty, freeing and discharging of his partakers, and confiscation* of his traitors and rebels; more than which could not come from subjects to their sovereign in one action. This he taketh so well at your hands, as he hath made it a resolution to himself to communicate with so loving and well approved subjects in all affairs that are of public nature at home or abroad.

'Two therefore are the causes of your present assembling: the one a foreign business; the other matters of government at home.

'The French King (as no doubt ye have heard) maketh at this present* hot war upon the Duke of Brittany. His army is now before Nantes, and holdeth it straitly besieged, being the principal city, if not in ceremony and preeminence yet in strength and wealth of that duchy: ye may guess at his hopes, by his attempting of the hardest part of the war first. The cause of this war he knoweth best. He allegeth the entertaining and succouring of the Duke of Orleans and some other French lords, whom the King taketh for⁴² his enemies.

⁴⁰ Dared or wanted (to follow)

⁴¹ Probably a 'Great Council' (perhaps November 1488), as Spedding argues (*S.* vi. 74-5 note). Bacon seems to have conflated the second session of parliament (9 November 1487-23 February 1488) with the third (13 January 1489-27 February 1490). The events narrated here led up to the battle of St Aubin, 28 July 1488.

⁴² Estimates as

Others divine of other matters. Both parts have by their ambassadors divers times prayed the King's aids; the French King, aids or neutrality; the Bretons, aids simply; for so their case requireth. The King, as a Christian Prince and blessed son of the holy church, hath offered himself as a mediator to treat a peace between them. The French King yielded* to treat*, but will not stay* the prosecution of the war. The Bretons, that desire peace most, hearken to it least; not upon confidence or stiffness⁴³ but upon distrust of true meaning;⁴⁴ seeing the war goes on. So as the King, after as much pains and care to effect a peace as ever he took in any business, not being able to remove the prosecution on the one side, nor the distrust on the other caused by that prosecution, hath let fall the treaty; not repenting* of it, but despairing of it now as not likely to succeed. Therefore by this narrative you now understand the state of the question, whereupon the King prayeth your advice; which is no other, but whether he shall enter into an auxiliary and defensive war for the Bretons against France?

'And the better to open your understandings in this affair, the King hath commanded me to say somewhat to you from him of the persons that do intervene in this business; and somewhat of the consequence thereof, as it hath relation to this kingdom; and somewhat of the example of it in general; making nevertheless no conclusion or judgement of any point, until his Grace hath received your faithful and politic advices.

'First for the King our sovereign himself, who is the principal person you are to eye* in this business; his Grace doth profess that he truly and constantly desireth to reign in peace: but his Grace saith he will neither buy peace with dishonour, nor take* it up at interest* of danger to ensue; but shall think it a good change*, if it please God to change the inward troubles and seditions wherewith he hath been hitherto exercised into an honourable foreign war.

'And for the other two persons in this action, the French King and the Duke of Brittany, his Grace doth declare unto you that they be the men unto whom he is of all other friends and allies most bounden; the one having held over him his hand of protection⁴⁵ from the tyrant; the other having reached forth unto him his

⁴³ Not out of confidence in their powers of resistance, or stubbornness.

⁴⁴ Disbelieving the alleged significance.

⁴⁵ Having given asylum.

hand of help for the recovery of his kingdom; so that his affection toward them in his natural person is upon equal terms. And whereas you may have heard that his Grace was enforced to fly out of Brittany into France, for doubts* of being betrayed, his Grace would not in any sort have that reflect upon the Duke of Brittany in defacement* of his former benefits; for that he is thoroughly informed that it was but the practice* of some corrupt persons about him, during the time of his sickness, altogether without his consent or privity.⁴⁶ But howsoever* these things do interest* his Grace in his particular, yet he knoweth well that the higher bond that tieth him to procure by all means the safety and welfare of his loving subjects, doth disinterest⁴⁷ him of these obligations of gratitude, otherwise than thus; that if his Grace be forced to make a war he do it without passion or ambition.

'For the consequence of this action towards this kingdom, it is much as the French King's intention is.⁴⁸ For if it be no more but to range his subjects to reason⁴⁹ who bear themselves stout upon the strength⁵⁰ of the Duke of Brittany, it is nothing to us. But if it be in the French King's purpose – or if it should not be in his purpose, yet if it shall follow all one⁵¹ as if it were sought – that the French King shall make a province of Brittany and join it to the crown of France; then it is worthy the consideration how this may import* England, as well in the increasement of the greatness of France by the addition of such a country that stretcheth his boughs⁵² unto our seas, as in depriving this nation and leaving it naked of so firm and assured confederates as the Bretons have always been. For then it will come to pass that, whereas not long since this realm was mighty upon the continent, first in territory and after in alliance, in respect of Burgundy and Brittany, which were confederates indeed but dependent confederates; now the one

⁴⁶ In July 1494, during an illness of Duke Francis, Peter Landois, treasurer of Brittany, was suborned by Richard III to capture Henry; thanks to information conveyed by Morton and Urswick, Henry escaped to France. Landois was executed a year later (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 29–37).

⁴⁷ Discharge, relieve from obligation (the King's higher duty being his subjects' welfare).

⁴⁸ It largely depends on the French King's intentions

⁴⁹ Bring to order.

⁵⁰ Who have (rebelliously) allied themselves with

⁵¹ Result as a natural consequence.

⁵² Cf. Psalm 80: 11.

being already cast partly into the greatness of France⁵³ and partly into that of Austria,⁵⁴ the other is like wholly to be cast into the greatness of France; and this island shall remain confined in effect within the salt waters, and girt about with the coast countries of two mighty monarchs.

‘For the example, it resteth likewise upon the same question, upon the French King’s intent. For if Brittany be carried and swallowed up by France, as the world abroad (apt to impute and construe the actions of Princes to ambition) conceive it will, then it is an example very dangerous and universal, that the lesser neighbour estate should be devoured of the greater. For this may be the case of Scotland towards England; of Portugal towards Spain; of the smaller estates of Italy towards the greater; and so of Germany; or as if some of you of the commons might not live and dwell safely besides some of these great lords. And the bringing in of this example will be chiefly laid to the King’s charge,⁵⁵ as to him that was most interested* and most able to forbid it. But then on the other side, there is so fair a pretext on the French King’s part (and yet pretext is never wanting to power), in regard the danger imminent to his own estate is such as may make this enterprise seem rather a work of necessity than of ambition, as doth in reason correct the danger of the example; for that the example of that which is done in a man’s own defence cannot be dangerous, because it is in another’s power to avoid it. But in all this business, the King remits himself to your grave and mature advice, whereupon he purposeth to rely.’

This was the effect of the Lord Chancellor’s speech touching the cause* of Brittany; for the King had commanded him to carry it so as to affect* the parliament towards the business; but without engaging the King in any express declaration.

The Chancellor went on:

‘For that which may concern the government at home, the King hath commanded me to say unto you that he thinketh there was never any King (for the small time that he hath reigned) had greater and juster cause of the two contrary passions of joy and sorrow than

⁵³ The duchy of Burgundy had been seized by the French King, Louis XI, in 1477.

⁵⁴ The daughter of the Duke of Burgundy had married Maximilian, Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria.

⁵⁵ Henry’s responsibility.

his Grace hath; joy, in respect of the rare and visible favours of Almighty God in girding the imperial sword upon his side, and assisting the same his sword against all his enemies, and likewise in blessing him with so many good and loving servants and subjects, which have never failed to give him faithful counsel, ready obedience, and courageous defence; sorrow, for that it hath not pleased God to suffer him to sheath his sword (as he greatly desired, otherwise than⁵⁶ for administration of justice), but that he hath been forced to draw it so oft to cut off traitorous and disloyal subjects, whom it seems God hath left (a few amongst many good) as the Canaanites amongst the people of Israel, to be thorns in their sides,⁵⁷ to tempt and try them; though the end hath been always (God's name be blessed therefore) that the destruction hath fallen upon their own heads.

'Wherefore his Grace saith that he seeth that it is not the blood spilt in the field that will save the blood in the city; nor the marshal's sword⁵⁸ that will set this kingdom in perfect peace: but that the true way is to stop the seeds of sedition and rebellion in their beginnings, and for that purpose to devise, confirm, and quicken good and wholesome laws against riots and unlawful assemblies of people and all combinations and confederacies of them by liveries, tokens,⁵⁹ and other badges of factious dependence; that the peace of the land may by these ordinances, as by bars of iron, be soundly bound in and strengthened, and all force both in court, country, and private houses be suppressed.

'The care hereof, which so much concerneth yourselves, and which the nature of the times doth instantly call for, his Grace commends to your wisdoms.

'And because it is the King's desire that this peace wherein he hopeth to govern and maintain you do not bear only unto you leaves, for you to sit under the shade of them in safety, but also should bear you fruit of riches, wealth, and plenty; therefore his

⁵⁶ Except when obliged to use it.

⁵⁷ Alluding to Numbers 33: 55, God's threat to the Israelites if they did not dispossess the people of Canaan.

⁵⁸ The official signal to begin or cease hostilities.

⁵⁹ The uniforms and badges (or favours) showing allegiance to a person or group. Henry made repeated attempts to curtail retainers wearing liveries, being a challenge to the sovereign's monopoly on armed power, but with varying success (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 64, 152, 155, 188-92).

Grace prays you to take into consideration matter of trade, as also the manufactures of the kingdom, and to repress the bastard and barren employment of moneys to usury⁶⁰ and unlawful exchanges; that they may be (as their natural use is) turned upon commerce, and lawful and royal trading; and likewise that our people be set awork in arts and handicrafts, that the realm may subsist more of itself,⁶¹ that idleness be avoided, and the draining out of our treasure for foreign manufactures stopped. But you are not to rest here only, but to provide further that whatsoever merchandise shall be brought in from beyond the seas may be employed upon the commodities of this land; whereby the kingdom's stock of treasure* may be sure to be kept from being diminished by any overtrading of the foreigner.⁶²

'And lastly, because the King is well assured that you would not have him poor that wishes you rich, he doubteth not but that you will have care as well to maintain his revenues of customs and all other natures*, as also to supply him with your loving aids,⁶³ if the case shall so require: the rather* for that you know the King is a good husband*, and but a steward in effect for the public, and that what comes from you is but as moisture drawn from the earth, which gathers into a cloud and falls back upon the earth again; and you know well how the kingdoms about you grow more and more in greatness, and the times are stirring, and therefore not fit to find the King⁶⁴ with an empty purse. More I have not to say to you, and wish that what hath been said had been better expressed: but that your wisdoms and good affections will supply. God bless your doings.'

It was no hard matter to dispose* and affect the parliament in this business,⁶⁵ as well in respect of the emulation* between the nations, and the envy* at the late growth of the French monarchy; as in regard of the danger to suffer the French to make their approaches upon England by obtaining so goodly a maritime prov-

⁶⁰ Objections to usury often used Aristotle's argument that money is by nature barren, so that using it to 'breed' is unnatural.

⁶¹ Be more self-subsistent.

⁶² Trade benefiting foreign powers more than England, so creating a 'trade-gap', when imports exceed exports.

⁶³ Additional subsidies, voted by parliament, and raised in the form of taxes.

⁶⁴ Not a suitable time for the King to be found.

⁶⁵ Concerning Brittany.

ince, full of sea-towns and havens, that might do mischief to the English either by invasion or by interruption of traffic.

The parliament was also moved with the point of oppression, for although the French seemed to speak reason, yet arguments are ever with multitudes too weak for suspicions.⁶⁶ Wherefore they did advise the King roundly* to embrace the Bretons' quarrel, and to send them speedy aids; and with much alacrity and forwardness granted to the King a great rate of subsidy⁶⁷ in contemplation* of these aids. But the King, both to keep a decency towards the French King, to whom he professed himself to be obliged, and indeed desirous rather to show war than to make it, sent new solemn ambassadors to intimate unto him the decree of his estates*, and to iterate* his motion that the French would desist from hostility; or if war must follow, to desire him to take it in good part if, at the motion of his people, who were sensible* of the cause of the Bretons as their ancient friends and confederates, he did send them succours; with protestation nevertheless that, to save all treaties and laws of friendship, he had limited* his forces to proceed in aid of the Bretons but in no wise to war upon the French, otherwise than as they maintained the possession of Brittany. But before this formal ambassage arrived, the party of the Duke had received a great blow, and grew to manifest declination.⁶⁸ For near the town of St Aubin in Brittany a battle had been given, where the Bretons were overthrown, and the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Orange taken prisoners, there being slain on the Bretons' part six thousand men, and amongst them the Lord Woodville and almost all his soldiers, valiantly fighting. And of the French part, one thousand two hundred, with their leader James Galeot, a great commander.

When the news of this battle came over into England, it was time for the King (who now had no subterfuge to continue further treaty, and saw before his eyes that Brittany went so speedily for lost,⁶⁹ contrary to his hopes; knowing also that with his people and foreigners both he sustained no small envy and disreputation for his former delays) to dispatch with all possible speed his succours into Brittany. Which he did under the conduct of Robert Lord Brooke,

⁶⁶ With a multitude, irrational fears overcome reason.

⁶⁷ Large sums raised by taxation.

⁶⁸ Clearly began to decline; the defeat was catastrophic.

⁶⁹ Was about to be lost.

to the number of eight thousand, choice men and well armed; who having a fair wind in few hours landed in Brittany, and joined themselves forthwith to those Breton forces that remained after the defeat, and marched straight on to find the enemy, and encamped fast* by them. The French, wisely husbanding* the possession of a victory, and well acquainted with the courage of the English, especially when they are fresh, kept themselves within their trenches, being strongly lodged, and resolved not to give battle. But meanwhile, to harass and weary the English, they did upon all advantages* set upon them with their light horse*; wherein nevertheless they received commonly loss, especially by means of the English archers.

But upon these achievements⁷⁰ Francis Duke of Brittany deceased; an accident* that the King might easily have foreseen, and ought to have reckoned upon and provided for; but that the point of reputation,⁷¹ when news first came of the battle lost (that somewhat must be done) did overbear* the reason of war.

After the Duke's decease the principal persons of Brittany, partly bought, partly through faction, put all things into confusion; so as the English, not finding head or body with whom to join their forces, and being in jealousy* of friends as well as in danger of enemies, and the winter begun, returned home five months after their landing. So the battle of St Aubin, the death of the Duke, and the retire* of the English succours, were (after some time) the causes of the loss of that duchy; which action some accounted as a blemish of the King's judgement, but most but as the misfortune of his times.

[Parliament and Law-giving, 1488-9]

But howsoever the temporary fruit of the parliament in their aid and advice given for Brittany, took not¹ nor prospered not; yet the lasting fruit of parliament, which is good and wholesome laws, did prosper, and doth yet continue till this day. For according to the

⁷⁰ When all these things had been achieved. The Duke had capitulated to Charles VIII on 20 August 1488, dying on 9 September.

⁷¹ Need to preserve his reputation.

¹ Found no favour.

Lord Chancellor's admonition, there were that parliament² divers excellent laws ordained, concerning the points which the King recommended.

First, the authority of the Star-chamber,³ which before subsisted by the ancient common laws of the realm, was confirmed in certain cases by act of parliament. This court is one of the sagest and noblest institutions of this kingdom. For in the distribution of courts of ordinary justice (besides the High Court of parliament), in which distribution the King's bench⁴ holdeth the pleas* of the crown; the Common-place,⁵ pleas civil; the Exchequer, pleas concerning the King's revenue; and the Chancery,⁶ the Pretorian power⁷ for mitigating* the rigour of law, in case of extremity, by the conscience of a good man. There was nevertheless always reserved a high and pre-eminent power to the King's council in causes* that might in example or consequence concern the state of the commonwealth; which if they were criminal, the council used to sit in the chamber called the Star-chamber; if civil, in the white-chamber or Whitehall. And as the Chancery had the Pretorian power for equity, so the Star-chamber had the Censorian power⁸ for offences under the degree of capital.⁹ This court of Star-chamber is compounded of good elements; for it consisteth of four kinds of persons; councillors, peers, prelates, and chief judges: it discerneth also principally of four kinds of causes; forces,¹⁰ frauds, crimes various of stellionate*,

² Bacon confuses the second and third parliaments; some of the laws mentioned here were passed in the latter session. Bacon draws here on legal sources not used by the historians.

³ Two rooms in Westminster, the *camera stellata* (so called because of their ceiling décor) where groups of the King's Councillors met to conduct their business. Only later (Bacon's account is anachronistic) did it become a court of criminal jurisdiction, consisting of the highest legal officers but no jury (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 97-100).

⁴ The supreme court of common law, in which the plaintiff (prosecutor) is the crown, trying offences against ruler and state.

⁵ Court of common pleas, which tried civil actions.

⁶ The High Court of Chancery (presided over by the Lord Chancellor, the supreme legal authority) is a court of equity, not law, lessening the severity or supplying the defects of judgements in the lower courts.

⁷ That of the Praetor, a magistrate elected by the Romans to moderate the rigour of the law in favour of natural justice.

⁸ That of the Censor, elected by the Romans every five years, who had a moral jurisdiction over the citizens' public and private life.

⁹ Less serious than offences carrying the death penalty.

¹⁰ Unlawful use of force (as by mobs or private armies).

and the inchoations* or middle* acts towards* crimes capital or heinous* not actually committed or perpetrated.* But that which was principally aimed at by this act was force, and the two chief supports of force, combination* of multitudes, and maintenance or headship* of great persons.¹¹

From the general peace of the country the King's care went on to the peace of the King's house, and the security of his great officers and councillors. But this law was somewhat of a strange composition and temper.* That if any of the King's servants under the degree of a lord, do conspire¹² the death of any of the King's council, or lord of the realm, it is made capital.¹³ This law was thought to be procured by the Lord Chancellor,¹⁴ who being a stern and haughty man, and finding he had some mortal enemies in court, provided for his own safety; drowning the envy of it in a general law by communicating the privilege with all other counsellors and peers, and yet not daring to extend it further than to the King's servants in check-roll,¹⁵ lest it should have been too harsh to the gentlemen and other commons of the kingdom, who might have thought their ancient liberty and the clemency of the laws of England invaded, 'if the will in any case of felony should be made the deed'.¹⁶ And yet the reason which the act yieldeth* (that is to say, that he that conspireth the death of counsellors may be thought indirectly and by a mean* to conspire the death of the King himself) is indifferent* to all subjects as well as to servants in court. But it seemeth this sufficed to serve the Lord Chancellor's turn at this time; but yet he lived to need a general law; for that he grew afterwards as odious to the country as he was then to the court.

From the peace of the King's house the King's care extended to the peace of private houses and families; for there was an excellent moral law moulded thus: The taking and carrying away of women¹⁷ forcibly and against their will (except female wards* and bond-

¹¹ Gentlemen or nobles (who could maintain large bands of supporters)

¹² That is, whether it be effected or not.

¹³ Punishable by death, whether or not the conspiracy takes place

¹⁴ Archbishop Morton, appointed in 1486.

¹⁵ Those enrolled in the King's household

¹⁶ If, in any criminal accusation under the degree of treason, the will is made the equivalent of the deed.

¹⁷ That is, abducting heiresses.

women*) was made capital: the parliament wisely and justly conceiving that the obtaining of women by force into possession (howsoever* afterwards assent might follow by allurements*) was but a rape drawn forth in length, because the first force drew on all the rest.

There was made also another law for peace in general, and repressing of murders and manslaughters, and was in amendment of the common laws of the realm; being this: That whereas by the common law the King's suit, in case of homicide, did expect the year and the day,¹⁸ allowed to the party's suit by way of appeal; and that it was found by experience that the party was many times compounded* with, and many times wearied with the suit, so that in the end such suit was let fall; and by that time the matter was in a manner forgotten, and thereby prosecution at the King's suit by indictment (which is ever best *flagrante* crimine*) neglected; it was ordained that the suit by indictment might be taken as well at any time within the year and the day as after; not prejudicing nevertheless the party's suit.

The King began also then, as well in wisdom as in justice, to pare* a little the privilege of clergy;¹⁹ ordaining that clerks* convict* should be burned in the hand – both because they might taste* of some corporal punishment, and that they might carry a brand of infamy. But for this good act's sake, the King himself was after²⁰ branded by Perkin's proclamation for an execrable breaker of the rites of holy church.

Another law was made for the better peace of the country, by which law the King's officers and farmers* were to forfeit their places and holds*, in case of unlawful retainer²¹ or partaking in routs* and unlawful assemblies.

These were the laws that were made for repressing of force, which those times did chiefly require; and were so prudently framed

¹⁸ Wait until a year and a day had elapsed. By common law, the crown could not begin an action (by indictment) in a murder case until a year and a day had elapsed, during which time the wife and heir of the murdered person were entitled to prosecute in their own name ('by way of appeal'). 'Experience showed that in fact the relatives ("the party") were often bought off, or simply lost interest, and so their suit was discontinued' (ed. Lockyer).

¹⁹ Clergymen were exempted from criminal proceedings before a secular judge.

²⁰ Subsequently (see p. 130 below)

²¹ Maintaining retinues of servants ('retainers'), who were often armed, so endangering public peace.

as they are found fit for all succeeding times, and so continue to this day.

There were also made good and politic laws that parliament against usury, which is the bastard use of money; and against unlawful chievances* and exchanges*, which is bastard usury; and also for the security of the King's customs; and for the employment of the procedures* of foreign commodities, brought in by merchants strangers, upon the native commodities of the realm; together with some other laws of less importance.

But howsoever the laws made in that parliament did bear good and wholesome fruit; yet the subsidy* granted at the same time bore a fruit that proved harsh and bitter. All was inned* at last into the King's barn; but it was after a storm. For when the commissioners entered into the taxation of the subsidy in Yorkshire and the bishoprick of Durham, the people upon a sudden grew into great mutiny,²² and said openly that they had endured of late years a thousand miseries, and neither could nor would pay the subsidy. This no doubt proceeded not simply of any present necessity, but much by reason of the old humour of those countries, where the memory of King Richard was so strong, that it lay like lees* in the bottom of men's hearts, and if the vessel was but stirred it would come up; and no doubt it was partly also by the instigation of some factious malcontents that bare principal stroke²³ amongst them.

Hereupon the commissioners, being somewhat astonished, deferred the matter unto the Earl of Northumberland, who was the principal man of authority in those parts. The Earl forthwith wrote unto the court, signifying to the King plainly enough in what flame* he found the people of those countries*, and praying the King's direction. The King wrote back peremptorily that he would not have one penny abated* of that which had been granted to him by parliament; both because it might encourage other countries to pray* the like release or mitigation; and chiefly because he would never endure that the base multitude should frustrate the authority of the parliament, wherein their votes and consents were concluded.²⁴ Upon this dispatch from court, the Earl assembled the principal justices and freeholders of the country; and speaking to

²² In February—March 1489.

²³ Had greatest influence.

²⁴ Included (since they were represented by their Member of Parliament).

them in the imperious language wherein the King had written to him, which needed not²⁵ (save that a harsh business was unfortunately fallen into the hands of a harsh man), did not only irritate the people, but make them conceive by the stoutness* and haughtiness of delivery of the King's errand, that himself²⁶ was the author or principal persuader of that counsel: whereupon the meaner sort routed* together, and suddenly assailing the earl in his house, slew him and divers of his servants; and rested not there, but creating for their leader Sir John Egremont, a factious person, and one that had of a long time borne an ill talent²⁷ towards the King, and being animated also by a base fellow, called John a Chamber, a very *boute-feu**, who bore much sway amongst the vulgar and populace, entered into open rebellion, and gave out in flat terms that they would go against King Henry and fight with him for the maintenance of their liberties.

When the King was advertised* of this new insurrection (being almost a fever that took him every year), after his manner little troubled therewith, he sent Thomas Earl of Surrey (whom he had a little before not only released out of the Tower and pardoned, but also received to especial favour) with a competent power against the rebels, who fought with the principal band of them and defeated them, and took alive John a Chamber their firebrand. As for Sir John Egremont, he fled into Flanders to the Lady Margaret of Burgundy, whose palace was the sanctuary and receptacle of all traitors against the King. John a Chamber was executed at York in great state; for he was hanged upon a gibbet* raised a stage higher in the midst of a square gallows, as a traitor paramount*; and a number of his men that were his chief complices were hanged upon the lower story round about him; and the rest were generally pardoned. Neither did the King himself omit his custom to be first or second in all his warlike exploits, making good his word which was usual with him when he heard of rebels, 'that he desired but to see them'. For immediately after he had sent down the Earl of Surrey, he marched towards them himself in person. And although in his journey he heard news of the victory, yet he went on as far as York, to pacify and settle those countries*: and that done, returned to

²⁵ Was unnecessary.

²⁶ The Earl, who was murdered on 28 April 1489.

²⁷ Evil disposition.

London, leaving the Earl of Surrey for his lieutenant in the northern parts, and Sir Richard Tunstal for his principal commissioner to levy the subsidy, whereof he did not remit a denier.²⁸

About the same time that the King lost so good a servant as the Earl of Northumberland, he lost likewise a faithful friend and ally of²⁹ James the Third, King of Scotland, by a miserable disaster. For this unfortunate Prince, after a long smother* of discontent and hatred of many of his nobility and people, breaking forth at times into seditions and alterations of court, was at last distressed* by them, having taken arms and surprised the person of Prince James his son (partly by force, partly by threats that they would otherwise deliver up the kingdom to the King of England) to shadow their rebellion, and to be the titular and painted head of those arms.³⁰ Whereupon the King (finding himself too weak) sought unto King Henry, as also unto the Pope and the King of France, to compose* those troubles between him and his subjects. The Kings accordingly interposed their mediations in a round* and princely manner, not only by way of request and persuasion, but also by way of protestation and menace, declaring that they thought it to be the common cause of all Kings,³¹ if subjects should be suffered to give laws unto their sovereign; and that they would accordingly resent it and revenge it. But the rebels, that had shaken off the greater yoke of obedience, had likewise cast away the lesser tie of respect; and fury prevailing above fear, made answer, that there was no talking of peace except their King would resign his crown. Whereupon (treaty of accord taking no place³²) it came to a battle at Bannocksbourn by Stirling. In which battle the King³³ transported with wrath and just indignation, inconsiderately fighting and precipitating the charge* before his whole numbers came up to him, was, notwithstanding the contrary express and strait* commandment of

²⁸ Latin *denarius*, 'any small coin' (thus refusing to abate the tax).

²⁹ Ally in; James the Third was murdered on 11 June 1488, before Northumberland's death. Bacon's error comes from his source here, Polydore Vergil.

³⁰ The rebels got Prince James into their power in February 1485, partly by force and partly by threats (to give Scotland to the English); then used the Prince as if he were the leader of their rebellion.

³¹ That all Kings shared a common hatred of rebellion.

³² The peace negotiations being unsuccessful

³³ James. His son, James IV, succeeded to the throne, aged fifteen.

the Prince his son, slain in the pursuit, being fled to a mill situate in the field where the battle was fought.

As for the Pope's embassy, which was sent by³⁴ Adrian de Castello an Italian legate (and perhaps as those times were might have prevailed more), it came too late for the embassy, but not for the ambassador. For passing through England and being honourably entertained and received of King Henry (who ever applied himself with much respect to the see of Rome), he fell into great grace* with the King, and great familiarity and friendship with Morton the Chancellor. Insomuch as the King, taking a liking to him and finding him to his mind, preferred* him to the bishoprick of Hereford, and afterwards to that of Bath and Wells, and employed him in many of his affairs of state that had relation to Rome. He was a man of great learning, wisdom, and dexterity in business of state; and having not long after ascended to the degree of cardinal, paid the King large tribute of his gratitude in diligent and judicious advertisement* of the occurrents* of Italy. Nevertheless, in the end of his time he was partaker of the conspiracy which cardinal Alphonso Petrucci and some other cardinals had plotted against the life of Pope Leo. And this offence, in itself so heinous, was yet in him aggravated by the motive thereof, which was not malice or discontent, but an aspiring mind to the papacy. And in this height of impiety there wanted not an intermixture of levity and folly, for that (as was generally believed) he was animated* to expect the papacy by a fatal mockery, the prediction of a sooth-sayer, which was, 'That one should succeed Pope Leo, whose name should be Adrian, an aged man of mean birth and of great learning and wisdom'; by which character and figure he took himself to be described, though it were fulfilled of Adrian the Fleming, son to a Dutch brewer, cardinal of Tortosa, and preceptor unto Charles the Fifth; the same that, not changing his christen-name, was afterwards called Adrian the Sixth.

But these things happened in the year following, which was the fifth of this King. But in the end of the fourth year³⁵ the King had called again his parliament, not as it seemeth for any particular

³⁴ In the person of.

³⁵ The third parliament, which met in January and February 1489, and again from October to February 1490.

occasion of state: but the former parliament being ended somewhat suddenly (in regard of the preparation³⁶ for Brittany), the King thought he had not remunerated his people sufficiently with good laws (which evermore was his retribution* for treasure*); and finding by the insurrection in the north, there was discontentment abroad in respect of the subsidy, he thought it good for to give his subjects yet further contentment and comfort in that kind. Certainly his times for good commonwealths' laws did excel; so as he may justly be celebrated for the best lawgiver to this nation after King Edward the First.³⁷ For his laws (whoso marks them well) are deep and not vulgar; not made upon the spur of a particular occasion for the present, but out of providence* of the future; to make the estate of his people still more and more happy, after the manner of the legislators in ancient and heroical times.³⁸

First therefore he made a law suitable to his own acts and times. For as himself had in his person and marriage made a final concord in the great suit and title for the crown, so by this law he settled the like peace and quiet in the private possessions of the subjects: ordaining, that fines³⁹ thenceforth should be final to conclude all strangers' rights; and that upon fines levied, and solemnly proclaimed, the subject should have his time of watch for five years after his title accrued; which if he forepassed*, his right should be bound for ever after; with some exception nevertheless of minors, married women, and such incompetent persons. This statute did in effect but restore an ancient statute of the realm, which was itself also made but in affirmance of the common law. The alteration had been by a statute commonly called the statute of *non-claim*, made in the time of Edward the Third. And surely this law⁴⁰ was a kind

³⁶ Getting ready to attack.

³⁷ Who was celebrated for laws restraining the clergy in their acquisition of lands, for protecting his subjects' persons and property from robbery, for appointing justices of peace, and many other enlightened measures. Contemporary historians think that Bacon exaggerated Henry's achievements as a legislator: see Introduction, p. xxx.

³⁸ As under Solon in Athens, Lycurgus in Sparta.

³⁹ A fine was a fictive lawsuit used for breaking an entail so as to facilitate the transfer of lands and estates. Prior to 1361, fines once proclaimed barred all claims by strangers after a year and one day. Henry's law 'made fines bar claims by strangers after five years, with exceptions for certain minors, women, and incompetents', unable to sue in a court of justice in their own right (ed. Weinberger).

⁴⁰ Of Henry VII.

of prognostic of the good peace which since his time hath (for the most part) continued in this kingdom until this day. For statutes of *non-claim* are fit for times of war, when men's heads are troubled, that they cannot intend* their estate; but statutes that quiet* possessions are fittest for times of peace, to extinguish suits and contentions; which is one of the banes of peace.

Another statute was made of singular policy; for the population apparently,⁴¹ and (if it be thoroughly considered) for the soldiery and militar forces of the realm. Inclosures⁴² at that time began to be more frequent, whereby arable land (which could not be manured* without people and families) was turned into pasture, which was easily rid* by a few herdsmen; and tenances⁴³ for years, lives, and at will (whereupon much of the yeomanry* lived), were turned into demesnes.⁴⁴ This bred a decay of people, and by consequence a decay of towns, churches, tithes,⁴⁵ and the like. The King likewise knew full well, and in no wise forgot, that there ensued withal upon this a decay and diminution of subsidies⁴⁶ and taxes; for the more gentlemen, ever the lower books of subsidies.⁴⁷ In remedying of this inconvenience the King's wisdom was admirable; and the parliament's at that time. Inclosures they would not forbid, for that had been to forbid the improvement of the patrimony⁴⁸ of the kingdom; nor tillage they would not compel, for that was to strive* with nature and utility*. But they took a course to take away depopulating inclosures and depopulating pasturage⁴⁹ and yet not that by name,⁵⁰ or by any imperious express prohibition, but by consequence.⁵¹ The ordinance was, that all houses of husbandry*, that

⁴¹ Manifestly tending to the increase of population, by introducing penalties against enclosures.

⁴² The fencing off of common land, originally arable, to make pasture for the exclusive use of rich sheep-owners, was one of the most violently attacked innovations of the late fifteenth century. See More's *Utopia*.

⁴³ Holdings (occupied by agreement, either for a specific term or indefinitely).

⁴⁴ Lands held by the lord of the manor for his own use.

⁴⁵ A tenth of one's goods, produce, or earnings, was payable annually to the church.

⁴⁶ Moneys granted to the sovereign by parliament to meet special needs; extraordinary taxes.

⁴⁷ Lists of taxable people.

⁴⁸ That is, by means of a more productive cultivation.

⁴⁹ Such kinds of pasturage as produced depopulation.

⁵⁰ By specific interdiction.

⁵¹ As the practical result.

were used with⁵² twenty acres of ground and upwards, should be maintained and kept up for ever; together with a competent* proportion of land to be used and occupied with them, and in no wise to be severed from them (as by another statute, made afterwards in his successor's time, was more fully declared); this upon forfeiture⁵³ to be taken, not by way of popular action, but by seizure of the land itself by the King and lords of the fee*, as to half the profits, till the houses and lands were restored.

By this means the houses being kept up did of necessity enforce a dweller; and the proportion of land for occupation being kept up, did of necessity enforce that dweller not to be a beggar or cottager, but a man of some substance, that might keep hinds* and servants, and set the plough on going. This did wonderfully concern* the might and mannerhood* of the kingdom, to have farms as it were of a standard sufficient to maintain an able body out of penury*, and did in effect amortize* a great part of the lands of the kingdom unto the hold and occupation of the yeomanry or middle people, of a condition between gentlemen and cottagers or peasants.

Now how much this did advance the militar power of the kingdom, is apparent by the true principles of war and the examples of other kingdoms. For it hath been held by the general opinion of men of best judgement⁵⁴ in the wars (howsoever* some few have varied, and that it may receive some distinction of case⁵⁵) that the principal strength of an army consisteth in the infantry or foot. And to make good infantry, it requireth men bred not in a servile or indigent fashion, but in some free and plentiful manner. Therefore if a state run most to noblemen and gentlemen, and that the husbandmen* and ploughmen be but as their workfolks or labourers, or else mere cottagers (which are but housed beggars), you may have a good cavalry, but never good stable bands of foot; like to coppice* woods, that if you leave in them staddles* too thick, they will run to bushes and briars, and have little clean underwood. And this is to be seen in France and Italy (and some other parts abroad),

⁵² Had annexed to them.

⁵³ If any one broke this statute he would not be prosecuted in the courts, but would have half of his profits seized until he complied.

⁵⁴ Bacon alludes to Machiavelli (*Prince*, ch. 12; *Discourses on Livy*, Book 2, ch. 18). See also 'Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates', pp. 251-2

⁵⁵ Distinctions between one time or place and another.

where in effect all is noblesse or peasantry (I speak of people out of towns⁵⁶), and no middle people; and therefore no good forces of foot, insomuch as they are enforced to employ mercenary bands of Switzers⁵⁷ (and the like) for their battalions of foot. Whereby also it comes to pass that those nations have much people and few soldiers. Whereas the King saw that contrariwise it would follow that England, though much less in territory, yet should have infinitely more soldiers of their native forces than those other nations have. Thus did the King secretly sow Hydra's teeth;⁵⁸ whereupon (according to the poets' fiction) should rise up armed men for the service of this kingdom.

The King also (having care to make his realm potent as well by sea as by land), for the better maintenance of the navy, ordained that wines and woads* from the parts of Gascony and Languedoc, should not be brought but in English bottoms*; bowing the ancient policy of this estate* from consideration of plenty to consideration of power: for that almost all the ancient statutes invite* (by all means) merchants strangers to bring in all sorts of commodities, having for end cheapness, and not looking to the point of state concerning the naval power.

The King also made a statute in that parliament monitory and minatory⁵⁹ towards justices of peace, that they should duly execute their office, inviting complaints against them, first to their fellow-justices, then to the justices of assize,⁶⁰ then to the King or Chancellor; and that a proclamation which he had published of that tenor* should be read in open session four times a year, to keep them awake. Meaning also to have his laws executed, and thereby to reap either obedience or forfeitures (wherein towards his later times he did decline too much to the left hand⁶¹), he did ordain remedy against the practice that was grown in use, to stop and damp*

⁵⁶ Living in the country.

⁵⁷ The Swiss, then famous for their 'mercenary' soldiers, who could be hired for money by anyone.

⁵⁸ As did Cadmus, according to Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 3. 15ff).

⁵⁹ Warning justices of the peace, threatening them with punishment. Henry repeatedly attempted to make JPs carry out their duties properly (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 166-71, 185-6).

⁶⁰ Periodical sessions in each county of England and Wales for the administration of civil and criminal justice.

⁶¹ In the wrong direction, towards forfeitures (which brought in money) rather than to obedience.

informations upon penal laws by procuring informations by collusion⁶² to be put in by the confederates of the delinquents, to be faintly prosecuted and let fall at pleasure, and pleading them in bar of⁶³ the informations which were prosecuted with effect.

He made also laws for the correction of the mint, and counterfeiting of foreign coin current.⁶⁴ And that no payment in gold should be made to any merchant stranger; the better to keep treasure within the realm, for that gold was the metal that lay in least room.⁶⁵

He made also statutes for the maintenance of drapery* and the keeping of wools within the realm; and not only so, but for stinting* and limiting the prices of cloth; one for the finer, and another for the coarser sort. Which I note, both because it was a rare thing to set prices by statute, especially upon our home commodities; and because of the wise model⁶⁶ of this act; not prescribing prices, but stinting them not to exceed a rate,⁶⁷ that the clothier might drape accordingly as he might afford.

Divers other good statutes were made that parliament, but these were the principal. And here I do desire those into whose hands this work shall fall, that they do take in good part* my long insisting upon the laws that were made in this King's reign; whereof I have these reasons, both because it was the pre-eminent virtue and merit of this King, to whose memory I do honour, and because it hath some correspondence to my person;⁶⁸ but chiefly because in my judgement it is some defect even in the best writers of history, that they do not often enough summarily* deliver and set down the most memorable laws that passed in the times whereof they write, being indeed the principal acts of peace. For though they may be had⁶⁹ in original books of law themselves; yet that informeth* not the judge-

⁶² By illegal co-operation between the criminal accused and the informer (often a confederate) who had brought the case. By pursuing a case half-heartedly, so that it would fail, the defendant was guaranteed immunity from further prosecution for the same offence.

⁶³ As a sufficient reason against.

⁶⁴ For punishing the adulteration of foreign coins allowed to pass as current in England.

⁶⁵ Took up least space, and so could be easily smuggled out

⁶⁶ Judicious moderation.

⁶⁷ Not fixing the exact price of each kind of cloth, but only the maximum.

⁶⁸ Connection with my profession (as lawyer).

⁶⁹ Found in the legal records (where Bacon himself drew them).

ment of kings and counsellors and persons of estate so well as to see them described and entered in the table* and portrait of the times.

About the same time⁷⁰ the King had a loan from the City of four thousand pounds, which was double to that they lent before, and was duly and orderly paid back at the day, as the former likewise had been: the King ever choosing rather to borrow too soon than to pay too late, and so keeping up his credit.

[Rebellion in Flanders, 1488-9]

Neither had the King yet cast off his cares and hopes touching Brittany, but thought to master the occasion by policy*, though his arms had been unfortunate, and to bereave the French King of the fruit of his victory. The sum of his design was to encourage Maximilian to go on with his suit for the marriage of Anne, the heir of Brittany, and to aid him to the consummation thereof. But the affairs of Maximilian were at that time in great trouble and combustion, by a rebellion of his subjects in Flanders, especially those of Bruges and Ghent; whereof the town of Bruges (at such time as Maximilian was there in person) had suddenly armed in tumult, and slain some of his principal officers, and taken himself prisoner, and held him in durance* till they had enforced him and some of his counsellors to take a solemn oath to pardon all their offences, and never to question and revenge the same in time to come. Nevertheless Frederick the Emperor would not suffer this reproach and indignity offered to his son to pass, but made sharp wars upon Flanders to reclaim and chastise the rebels. But the Lord Ravenstein, a principal person about Maximilian and one that had taken the oath of abolition¹ with his master, pretending the religion thereof,² but indeed upon private ambition (and as it was thought instigated and corrupted from France), forsook the Emperor and Maximilian his lord, and made himself an head of the popular party, and seized upon the towns of Ypres and Sluys with both the castles; and forthwith sent to the Lord Cordes, governor of Picardy under

⁷⁰ Bacon drastically compresses the historical narrative of these events: see ed. Weinberger, pp. 88-91.

¹ The oath just mentioned, to pardon the rebels.

² Professing the oath to be categorically binding.

the French King, to desire aid, and to move* him that he on the behalf of the French King would be protector of the united towns, and by force of arms reduce* the rest. The Lord Cordes was ready to embrace the occasion, which was partly of his own setting, and sent forthwith greater forces than it had been possible for him to raise on the sudden if he had not looked for such a summons before, in aid of the Lord Ravenstein and the Flemings, with instructions to invest* the towns between France and Bruges. The French forces besieged a little town called Dixmude, where part of the Flemish forces joined with them.

While they lay at this siege the King of England, upon pretence of the safety of the English pale³ about Calais (but in truth being loth that Maximilian should become contemptible and thereby be shaken off by the states* of Brittany about his marriage), sent over the Lord Morley with a thousand men unto the Lord Daubeney, then deputy of Calais, with secret instructions to aid Maximilian and to raise the siege of Dixmude. The Lord Daubeney (giving it out that all was for the strengthening of the English marches⁴) drew out of the garrisons of Calais, Hammes, and Guines, to the number of a thousand men more: so that with the fresh succours that came under the conduct of the Lord Morley, they made up to the number of two thousand or better. Which forces, joining with some companies of Almaines*, put themselves into Dixmude, not perceived by the enemies; and passing through the town (with some reinforcement from the forces that were in the town) assailed the enemies' camp, negligently guarded as being out of fear,⁵ where there was a bloody fight, in which the English and their partakers* obtained the victory, and slew to the number of eight thousand men, with the loss on the English part of a hundred or thereabouts; amongst whom was the Lord Morley. They took also their great ordnance,⁶ with much rich spoils, which they carried to Newport;⁷ whence the Lord Daubeney returned to Calais, leaving the hurt men and some other voluntaries in Newport.

³ Fence or zone, within which English rule prevailed.

⁴ Border lands (here, those around Calais adjoining French territory).

⁵ Beyond danger.

⁶ Artillery belonging to the French.

⁷ A town at the mouth of the river on which Dixmude stands.

But the Lord Cordes being at Ypres with a great power of men, thinking to recover the loss and disgrace of the fight at Dixmude, came presently on and sat down before Newport and besieged it. And after some days' siege he resolved to try the fortune of an assault; which he did one day, and succeeded therein so far that he had taken the principal tower and fort in that city, and planted upon it the French banner; whence nevertheless they were presently beaten forth by the English, by the help of some fresh succours of archers, arriving by good fortune (at the instant) in the haven of Newport. Whereupon the Lord Cordes, discouraged, and measuring the new succours which were small by the success which was great, left his siege.⁸ By this means matters grew more exasperate* between the two Kings of England and France, for* that in the war of Flanders the auxiliary forces of French and English were much blooded⁹ one against another; which blood rankled the more by the vain words of the Lord Cordes, that declared himself an open enemy of the English, beyond that that appertained to the present service, making it a common by-word* of his, that he could be content to lie in hell seven years so he might win Calais from the English.

The King having thus upheld the reputation of Maximilian, advised him now to press on his marriage with Brittany to a conclusion; which Maximilian accordingly did; and so far forth prevailed both with the young lady and with the principal persons about her, as the marriage was consummate by proxy¹⁰ with a ceremony at that time in these parts new. For she was not only publicly contracted, but stated¹¹ as a bride, and solemnly bedded,¹² and after she was laid, there came in Maximilian's ambassador with letters of procuration,¹³ and in the presence of sundry noble personages, men and women, put his leg (stript naked to the knee) between the espousal sheets,¹⁴ to the end that that ceremony might be thought to amount to a consummation and actual knowledge.¹⁵ This done,

⁸ Raised the siege, and went away.

⁹ Stained with each other's blood.

¹⁰ By an agent, or representative (so that Charles should not know about it).

¹¹ Treated with all the ceremony of state.

¹² Ceremonially displayed in the marriage-bed.

¹³ Documents appointing a person to act on one's behalf.

¹⁴ Richer than usual linen on the marriage-bed.

¹⁵ Carnal knowledge, physical consummation.

Maximilian (whose property¹⁶ was to leave things then when they were almost comen to perfection, and to end them by imagination*; like ill* archers, that draw not their arrows up to the head*; and who might as easily have bedded the lady himself as to have made a play and disguise of it), thinking now all assured, neglected for a time his further proceeding, and intended* his wars.

Meanwhile the French King (consulting with his divines, and finding that this pretended consummation¹⁷ was rather an invention of court than any ways valid by the laws of the church), went more really* to work, and by secret instruments and cunning agents – as well matrons about the young lady as counsellors – first sought to remove the point* of religion and honour out of the mind of the lady herself; wherein there was a double labour, for Maximilian was not only contracted unto the lady, but Maximilian's daughter was likewise contracted to King Charles: so as the marriage halted* upon both¹⁸ feet, and was not clear* on either side. But for the contract with King Charles, the exception lay plain and fair, for that Maximilian's daughter was under years of consent, and so not bound by law; but a power of disagreement* left to either part. But for the contract made by Maximilian with the lady herself, they were harder driven,¹⁹ having nothing to allege but that it was done without the consent of her sovereign lord King Charles, whose ward and client* she was, and he to her in place of a father; and therefore it was void and of no force, for want of such consent. Which defect (they said) though it would not evacuate* a marriage after cohabitation and actual consummation, yet it was enough to make void a contract. For as for the pretended consummation, they made sport with it and said that it was an argument that Maximilian was a widower and a cold wooer, that could content himself to be a bridegroom by deputy, and would not make a little journey to put all out of question. So that the young lady, wrought upon by these reasons finely instilled* by such as the French King (who spared* for no rewards or promises) had made on his side; and allured

¹⁶ Peculiarity of character.

¹⁷ The ambassador's symbolic gesture of putting his leg between the sheets.

¹⁸ Charles VIII's marriage with Anne of Brittany was open to two objections: she had been married by proxy to Maximilian, and Charles was already engaged to Maximilian's daughter.

¹⁹ Put to difficulties.

likewise by the present glory and greatness of King Charles (being also a young king and a bachelor); and loth to make her country the seat of a long and miserable war; secretly yielded to accept of King Charles.

But during this secret treaty with the lady, the better to save it from blasts of opposition and interruption, King Charles, resorting to his wonted arts, and thinking to carry the marriage as he had carried the wars by entertaining the King of England in vain belief, sent a solemn ambassage by Francis Lord of Luxemburg, Charles Marignian, and Robert Gagvien, general of the order of the *bons-hommes* of the Trinity,²⁰ to treat a peace and league with the King; accoupling it with an article in the nature of a request, that the French King might with the King's good will (according unto his right of seigniory* and tutelage*) dispose of the marriage of the young Duchess of Brittany as he should think good, offering by a judicial proceeding to make void the marriage of Maximilian by proxy. Also all this while, the better to amuse* the world, he did continue* in his court and custody the daughter of Maximilian, who formerly had been sent unto him to be bred and educated in France, not dismissing or renvoying* her but contrariwise professing and giving* out strongly* that he meant to proceed with that match; and that for the Duchess of Brittany, he desired only to preserve his right of seigniory, and to give her in marriage to some such ally as might depend upon him.

When the three commissioners came to the court of England, they delivered their ambassage unto the King, who remitted* them to his council; where some days after they had audience, and made their proposition by the Prior of the Trinity (who though he were third in place, yet was held the best speaker of them) to this effect:

'My lords, the King our master, the greatest and mightiest King that reigned in France since Charles the great²¹ whose name he beareth, hath nevertheless thought it no disparagement to his greatness at this time to propound a peace, yea and to pray a peace, with the King of England. For which purpose he hath sent us his commissioners, instructed and enabled with full and ample power to treat and conclude*; giving us further in charge to open in some

²⁰ The Trinitarians, an order of knights founded during the crusades.

²¹ Charlemagne.

other business the secrets of his own intentions. These be indeed the precious love tokens between great Kings, to communicate one with another the true state of their affairs, and to pass by nice* points of honour, which ought not to give law unto affection.²² This I do assure your lordships, it is not possible for you to imagine the true and cordial love that the King our master beareth to your sovereign, except you were near him as we are. He useth his name with so great respect, he remembereth their first acquaintance at Paris with so great contentment, nay he never speaks of him but that presently he falls into discourse of the miseries of great Kings, in that they cannot converse with their equals, but with their servants. This affection to your King's person and virtues God hath put into the heart of our master, no doubt for the good of Christendom, and for purposes yet unknown to us all; for other root it cannot have, since it was the same to the Earl of Richmond that it is now to the King of England. This is therefore the first motive that makes our King to desire peace and league with your sovereign, good affection, and somewhat that he finds in his own heart. This affection is also armed with reason of estate. For our King doth in all candour and frankness of dealing open himself unto you, that having an honourable, yea and holy purpose,²³ to make a voyage and war in remote parts, he considereth that it will be of no small effect in point of reputation to his enterprise, if it be known abroad that he is in good peace with all his neighbour princes, and specially with the King of England, whom for good causes he esteemeth most.

'But now, my lords, give me leave to use a few words to remove all scruples* and misunderstandings between your sovereign and ours concerning some late actions; which if they be not cleared, may perhaps hinder this peace; to the end that for matters past neither King may conceive unkindness of other, nor think the other conceiveth unkindness of him. The late actions are two; that of Brittany, and that of Flanders. In both which it is true that the subjects' swords of both Kings have encountered and stricken*; and the ways and inclinations also of the two Kings in respect of their confederates and allies have severed.

²² Convey a legal status to personal feelings.

²³ To make a crusade against the infidels.

'For that of Brittany: the King your sovereign knoweth best what hath passed. It was a war of necessity on our master's part. And though the motives of it were sharp and piquant as could be, yet did he make that war rather with an olive-branch than a laurel-branch²⁴ in his hand; more desiring peace than victory. Besides, from time to time he sent, as it were, blank papers to your King to write the conditions of peace. For though both his honour and safety went upon it,²⁵ yet he thought neither of them too precious to put into the King of England's hands. Neither doth our King on the other side make any unfriendly interpretation of your King's sending of succours to the Duke of Brittany; for the King knoweth well that many things must be done of Kings for satisfaction of their people; and it is not hard to discern what is a King's own. But this matter of Brittany is now by the act of God ended and passed; and, as the King hopeth, like the way* of a ship in the sea, without leaving any impression* in either of the Kings' minds; as he is sure for his part it hath not done in his.

'For the action of Flanders: as the former of Brittany was a war of necessity, so this was a war of justice, which with a good King is of equal necessity with danger of estate, for else he should leave* to be a King. The subjects of Burgundy²⁶ are subjects in chief to the crown of France, and their Duke the homager* and vassal of France. They had wont to be good subjects, howsoever* Maximilian hath of late distempered* them. They fled to the King for justice and deliverance from oppression. Justice he could not deny; purchase* he did not seek. This was good²⁷ for Maximilian if he could have seen it in people mutined*, to arrest fury and prevent despair. My lords, it may be this I have said is needless, save that the King our master is tender* in any thing that may but glance* upon the friendship of England. The amity between the two Kings no doubt stands entire and inviolate. And that their subjects' swords have clashed, it is nothing unto the public peace of the crowns; it being a thing very usual in auxiliary forces of the best and straitest* confederates to meet and draw blood in the field. Nay many times

²⁴ Symbolizing peace and victory, respectively.

²⁵ Depended on.

²⁶ Here including Flanders, over which Charles, like other French kings, claimed sovereignty.

²⁷ Would have been good.

there be aids* of the same nation on both sides, and yet it is not for all that a kingdom divided in itself.

‘It resteth my lords that I impart unto you a matter that I know your lordships all will much rejoyce to hear; as that which importeth* the Christian commonweal more than any action that hath happened of long time. The King our master hath a purpose and determination to make war upon the kingdom of Naples, being now in the possession of a bastard slip²⁸ of Aragon, but appertaining unto his majesty by clear and undoubted right;²⁹ which if he should not by just arms seek to recover, he could neither acquit his honour nor answer it to his people.³⁰ But his noble and Christian thoughts rest not here: for his resolution and hope is to make the reconquest of Naples but as a bridge to transport his forces into Grecia, and not to spare blood or treasure (if it were to the impawning his crown and dispeopling of France) till either he hath overthrown the empire of the Ottomans,³¹ or taken it in his way to paradise. The King knoweth well that this is a design that could not arise in the mind of any King that did not steadfastly look up unto God, whose quarrel this is, and from whom cometh both the will and the deed. But yet it is agreeable to the person that he beareth (though unworthy) of the Thrice Christian King, and the eldest son of the church;³² whereunto he is also invited by the example (in more ancient time) of King Henry the Fourth of England (the first renowned King of the house of Lancaster; ancestor* though not progenitor³³ to your King); who had a purpose towards the end of his time (as you know better) to make an expedition into the Holy-land; and by the example also (present before his eyes) of that honourable and religious war which the King of Spain now maketh and hath almost brought to perfection*, for the recovery of the realm of Granada

²⁸ Offshoot. (Ferdinand I, illegitimate son of Alonso V, King of Aragon and Naples, who reigned from 1469 to 1494.)

²⁹ The Aragonese dynasty had seized Naples in 1442 from the Angevin rulers, who were of French descent, and whose claim Charles had inherited.

³⁰ Neither leave his honour untarnished, nor justify to his subjects his failure to pursue his claim.

³¹ The Turks had occupied the Holy Land and were now threatening south-east Europe.

³² The titles granted by the papacy to the French kings.

³³ Here ‘predecessor’, as the Latin version explains.

from the Moors.³⁴ And although this enterprise may seem vast and unmeasured, for the King to attempt that by his own forces wherein (heretofore) a conjunction of most of the Christian Princes hath found work enough; yet his Majesty wisely considereth that sometimes smaller forces being united under one command are more effectual in proof, though not so promising in opinion and fame, than much greater forces variously compounded by associations and leagues, which commonly in a short time after their beginnings turn to dissociations and divisions. But, my lords, that which is as a voice from heaven that calleth the King to this enterprise, is a rent* at this time in the house of the Ottomans. I do not say but there hath been brother against brother in that house before, but never any that had refuge to the arms of the Christians as now hath Gemes³⁵ (brother under Bajazet that reigneth), the far braver man of the two; the other being between a monk and a philosopher; and better read in the Alcoran* and Averroes³⁶ than able [to] wield the sceptre of so warlike an empire. This therefore is the King our master's memorable and heroical resolution for an holy war. And because he carrieth in this the person of a Christian soldier as well as of a great temporal monarch, he beginneth with humility; and is content for this cause to beg peace at the hands of other Christian Kings.

‘There remaineth only rather a civil request than any essential part of our negotiation, which the King maketh to the King your sovereign. The King (as all the world knoweth) is lord in chief of the duchy of Brittany. The marriage of the heir belongeth to him as guardian. This is a private patrimonial right, and no business of estate. Yet nevertheless (to run a fair course³⁷ with your King, whom he desires to make another himself, and to be one and the same thing with him), his request is, that with the King's favour and consent he may dispose of her marriage as he thinketh good, and make void the intruded* and pretended marriage of Maximilian, according to justice.

³⁴ Ferdinand and Isabella drove the Moors out of Granada in 1492.

³⁵ He and his brother, Bajazet II, struggled for succession after the death of their father, the great Sultan Mohamed II in 1481.

³⁶ Distinguished Arabic philosopher of the twelfth century, whose commentaries on Aristotle were influential for centuries

³⁷ Deal open and fairly

‘This, my lords, is all that I have to say, desiring your pardon for my weakness in the delivery.’

Thus did the French ambassadors, with great shew of their King’s affection and many sugared words, seek to addulce* all matters between the two Kings; having two things for their ends; the one, to keep the King quiet till the marriage of Brittany was past (and this was but a summer fruit, which they thought was almost ripe, and would be soon gathered). The other was more lasting, and that was to put him into such a temper as he might be no disturbance or impediment to the voyage for Italy.

The lords of the council were silent, and said only that they knew the ambassadors would look for no answer till they had reported to the King. And so they rose from council.

The King could not well tell what to think of the marriage of Brittany. He saw plainly the ambition of the French King was to impatronize* himself of the duchy; but he wondered he would bring into his house a litigious* marriage, especially considering who was his successor.³⁸ But weighing one thing with another, he gave Brittany for lost, but resolved to make his profit of this business of Brittany as a quarrel for war, and of that of Naples as a wrench* and mean* for peace; being well advertised* how strongly the King was bent upon that action. Having therefore conferred divers times with his council, and keeping himself somewhat close*, he gave a direction to the Chancellor for a formal answer to the ambassadors, and that he did in the presence of his council. And after, calling the Chancellor to him apart, bad* him speak in such language as was fit for a treaty that was to end in a breach*; and gave him also a special caveat*, that he should not use any words to discourage the voyage of [to] Italy. Soon after, the ambassadors were sent for to the council, and the Lord Chancellor spake to them in this sort:

‘My lords amhassadors, I shall make answer, by the King’s commandment, unto the eloquent declaration of you my lord Prior, in a brief and plain manner. The King forgetteth not his former love and acquaintance with the King your master. But of this there needeth no repetition; for if it be between them as it was, it is well; if there be any alteration, it is not words will make it up. For the business of Brittany, the King findeth it a little strange that the

³⁸ The heir to the throne was the Duke of Orleans, opposed to Charles.

French King maketh mention of it as matter of well deserving at his hand. For that deserving was no more but to make him his instrument to surprise one of his best confederates. And for the marriage, the King would not meddle in it, if your master would marry by the book,³⁹ and not by the sword. For that of Flanders, if the subjects of Burgundy had appealed to your King as their chief lord, at first,⁴⁰ by way of supplication, it might have had a shew of justice. But it was a new form of process*, for subjects to imprison⁴¹ their prince first, and to slay his officers, and then to be complainants. The King saith that sure he is, when the French King and himself sent⁴² to the subjects of Scotland (that had taken arms against their King), they both spake in another style, and did in princely manner signify their detestation of popular attentates* upon the person or authority [of] Princes. But, my lords ambassadors, the King leaveth these two actions thus. That on the one side, he hath not received any manner of satisfaction from you concerning them; and on the other, that he doth not apprehend* them so deeply as in respect of them to refuse to treat of peace, if other things may go hand in hand. As for the war of Naples and the design against the Turk, the King hath commanded me expressly to say that he doth wish with all his heart to his good brother the French King, that his fortunes may succeed according to his hopes and honourable intentions; and whensoever he shall hear that he is prepared for Grecia – as your master is pleased now to say that he beggeth a peace of the King, so the King then will beg of him a part in that war.

‘But now, my lords ambassadors, I am to propound unto you somewhat on the King’s part. The King your master hath taught our King what to say and demand. You say (my lord Prior) that your King is resolved to recover his right to Naples, wrongfully detained from him; and that if he should not thus do, he could not acquit his honour, nor answer it to his people. Think, my lords, that the King our master saith the same thing over again to you,

³⁹ According to proper agreement; the Latin translation (*liturgia*) implies ‘by a ceremonial order, determined by a spiritual authority’. (The French King claiming the right to dispose of her in marriage.)

⁴⁰ If they had begun by appealing.

⁴¹ As had happened to Maximilian at Bruges (see p. 69).

⁴² As they did before the death of James III of Scotland (see p. 62).

touching Normandy, Guienne, Anjou; yea, and the kingdom of France⁴³ itself. I cannot express it better than in your own words. If therefore the French King shall consent that the King our master's title* to France (or least tribute* for the same) be handled* in the treaty, the King is content to go on with the rest; otherwise he refuseth to treat.*

The ambassadors, being somewhat abashed* with this demand, answered in some heat that they doubted not but that the King their sovereign's sword would be able to maintain his sceptre; and they assured themselves, he neither could nor would yield to any diminution of the crown of France, either in territory or regality.* But howsoever, they were too great matters for them to speak of, having no commission. It was replied that the King looked for no other answer from them, but would forthwith send his own ambassadors to the French King. There was a question also asked at the table*: whether the French King would agree to have the disposing of the marriage of Brittany, with an exception and exclusion that he should not marry her himself?⁴⁴ To which the ambassadors answered, that it was so far out of their King's thoughts as they had received no instructions touching the same.

Thus were the ambassadors dismissed, all save the Prior; and were followed immediately by Thomas Earl of Ormond, and Thomas Goldenston, Prior of Christ-Church in Canterbury, who were presently sent over into France. In the mean space Lionel, Bishop of Concordia, was sent as nuncio* from Pope Alexander the Sixth⁴⁵ to both Kings, to move a peace between them. For Pope Alexander, finding himself pent* and locked up by a league and association of the principal states of Italy, that he could not make his way for the advancement of his own house (which he immoderately thirsted after), was desirous to trouble the waters in Italy, that he might fish the better; casting the net not out of St Peter's, but out of Boſgia's bark.* And doubting lest the fears from England might stay the French King's voyage into Italy, dispatched this bishop to

⁴³ Since Edward III, English kings had claimed to be kings of France also.

⁴⁴ In Bacon's interpretation, Henry suspects that Charles VIII is intending to marry Anne himself.

⁴⁵ Bacon's error: it was Innocent VIII (Pope from 1484-92), not Alexander VI, who became Pope in August 1492 after the wedding of Charles VIII and Anne in December 1491 (ed. Weinberger).

compose all matters between the two Kings, if he could: who first repaired to the French King, and finding him well inclined (as he conceived), took* on his journey towards England, and found the English ambassadors at Calais on their way towards the French King. After some conference with them, he was in honourable manner transported over into England, where he had audience of the King. But notwithstanding he had a good ominous name to have made a peace,⁴⁶ nothing followed. For in the mean time the purpose of the French King to marry the Duchess could be no longer dissembled. Wherefore the English ambassadors (finding how things went) took their leave and returned. And the Prior⁴⁷ also was warned from hence, to depart out of England. Who when he turned his back (more like a pedant* than an ambassador), dispersed* a bitter libel in Latin verse against the King; unto which the King (though he had nothing of a pedant) yet was content to cause an answer to be made in like verse; and that as speaking in his own person; but in a style of scorn and sport.

About this time also was born the King's second son Henry,⁴⁸ who afterwards reigned. And soon after followed the solemnization of the marriage between Charles and Anne, Duchess of Brittany, with whom he received the duchy of Brittany as her dowry; the daughter of Maximilian being a little before sent home. Which when it came to the ears of Maximilian (who would never believe it till it was done, being ever the principal in deceiving himself; though in this the French King did very handsomely second it), and tumbling it over and over in his thoughts, that he should at one blow, with such a double scorn, be defeated both of the marriage of his daughter and his own (upon both which he had fixed high imaginations), he lost all patience; and casting off the respects fit to be continued between great Kings, even when their blood is hottest and most risen, fell to bitter invectives against the person and actions of the French King; and (by how much he was the less able to do, talking so much the more) spake all the injuries he could devise of Charles, saying that he was the most perfidious man upon the earth; and that he had made a marriage compounded between an advoultry* and a rape; which was done (he said) by the just

⁴⁶ The ambassador's name ('Concordia') seemed a good omen for peace.

⁴⁷ Robert Gaguin (Gaguinus).

⁴⁸ Subsequently King Henry VIII, born 22 June 1491.

judgement of God to the end that, the nullity thereof being so apparent to all the world, the race of so unworthy a person might not reign in France. And forthwith he sent ambassadors as well to the King of England as to the King of Spain, to incite them to war and to treat a league offensive against France, promising to concur with great forces of his own.

[War with France, 1491]

Hereupon the King of England (going nevertheless his own way) called a parliament, it being the seventh year¹ of his reign; and the first day of opening thereof (sitting under his cloth of estate²) spake himself unto his Lords and Commons in this manner.

'My Lords and you the Commons; when I purposed to make a war in Brittany by my lieutenant, I made declaration thereof to you by my Chancellor. But now that I mean to make a war upon France in person, I will declare it to you myself. That war was to defend another man's right,³ but this is to recover our own; and that ended by accident, but we hope this shall end in victory.

'The French King troubles the Christian world. That which he hath is not his own, and yet he seeketh more. He hath invested* himself of Brittany. He maintaineth the rebels in Flanders; and he threateneth Italy. For ourselves, he hath proceeded from dissimulation to neglect, and from neglect to contumely.* He hath assailed our confederates; he denieth our tribute; in a word, he seeks war. So did not his father, but sought peace at our hands; and so perhaps will he, when good counsel or time shall make him see as much as his father did.

'Meanwhile, let us make his ambition our advantage, and let us not stand upon a few crowns⁴ of tribute or acknowledgement, but by the favour of Almighty God try our right for the crown of France itself; remembering that there hath been a French King prisoner⁵

¹ Spedding suggests that Bacon, following Polydore Vergil, has again interpreted as a parliament what was only a 'Great Council', called in June 1491, preceding the parliament, which assembled in October (*S*, vi. 116-17 note). Like almost all the speeches, this is Bacon's invention.

² Royal canopy.

³ The Duke of Brittany's.

⁴ Coins (a crown was worth five shillings), hence 'taxes'.

⁵ King John II of France, defeated by the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers in 1357, and brought prisoner to England.

in England, and a King of England crowned⁶ in France. Our confederates are not diminished. Burgundy is in a mightier hand than ever, and never more provoked. Brittany cannot help us, but it may hurt them. New acquests* are more burden than strength. The malcontents of his own kingdom have not been base populace,⁷ nor titulary impostors,⁸ but of an higher nature. The King of Spain (doubt ye not) will join with us, not knowing where the French King's ambition will stay. Our holy father (the Pope) likes no Tramontanes⁹ in Italy. But howsoever it be, this matter of confederates is rather to be thought on than reckoned on; for God forbid but England should be able to get reason of¹⁰ France without a second.*

'At the battles of Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, we were of ourselves.¹¹ France hath much people, and few soldiers: they have no stable bands* of foot. Some good horse* they have, but those are forces which are least fit for a defensive war, where the actions are in the assailant's choice.¹² It was our discords only that lost France; and (by the power of God) it is the good peace which we now enjoy that will recover it. God hath hitherto blessed my sword. I have in this time that I have reigned, weeded out my bad subjects and tried* my good. My people and I know one another, which breeds confidence. And if there should be any bad blood left in the kingdom, an honourable foreign war will vent* or purify it.¹³ In this great business let me have your advice and aid. If any of you were to make his son knight, you might have aid of your tenants by law.¹⁴ This concerns the knighthood and spurs¹⁵ of the kingdom, whereof I am father, and bound not only to seek to maintain it but to advance it. But for matter of treasure, let it not be taken from the poorest sort but from those to whom the benefit of the war may

⁶ Henry VI was crowned King of France in Paris in 1431.

⁷ The people, or mob. The first printed text (1622) reads 'have not been base, popular' (that is vulgar, belonging to the common people), which is more coherent grammatically.

⁸ False claimants to a title.

⁹ Foreigners, 'people from across the mountains' -- here, the Alps.

¹⁰ Overcome.

¹¹ On our own.

¹² Where the attackers can dictate tactics.

¹³ Cf. 'Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates', p. 256.

¹⁴ According to feudal custom, tenants had to grant their lord a sum of money (an 'aid') for the knighting of his eldest son.

¹⁵ Signs of valour, manliness.

redound. France is no wilderness, and I that profess good husbandry* hope to make the war (after the beginnings) to pay itself. Go together in God's name, and lose no time, for I have called this parliament wholly for this cause.'

Thus spake the King. But for all this, though he shewed great forwardness* for a war, not only to his parliament and court but to his privy council likewise (except the two bishops¹⁶ and a few more), yet nevertheless in his secret intentions he had no purpose to go through with any war upon France. But the truth was, that he did but traffic¹⁷ with that war, to make his return* in money. He knew well that France was now entire and at unity with itself, and never so mighty many years before.¹⁸ He saw, by the taste he had of his forces sent into Brittany, that the French knew well enough how to make war with the English, by not putting things to the hazard of a battle but wearying them by long sieges of towns and strong fortified encampings. James the Third of Scotland, his true friend and confederate, gone; and James the Fourth (that had succeeded) wholly at the devotion of France, and ill-affected towards him. As for the conjunctions of Ferdinando of Spain and Maximilian, he could make no foundation upon¹⁹ them. For the one had power and not will; and the other had will and not power. Besides, that Ferdinando had but newly taken breath from the war with the Moors; and merchanded* at this time with France for the restoring of the counties of Roussillon and Perpignan, oppignorated* to the French. Neither was he out of fear of the discontents and ill blood within the realm; which having used always to repress and appease in person, he was loth they should find him at a distance beyond sea, and engaged in war. Finding therefore the inconveniencies and difficulties in the prosecution of a war, he cast with himself how to compass two things. The one, how by the declaration and inchoation* of a war to make his profit. The other, how to come off from the war with saving of his honour. For profit, it was to be made two ways, upon his subjects for the war, and upon his enemies for the peace; like a good merchant, that maketh his gain both upon

¹⁶ John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard Fox, Bishop of Exeter.

¹⁷ Trade, use for commercial purposes. This is Bacon's interpretation of the King's motives.

¹⁸ Since a long time.

¹⁹ Trust in.

the commodities exported and imported back again. For the point of honour, wherein he might suffer for giving over the war, he considered well that as he could not trust upon the aids of Ferdinando and Maximilian for supports of war, so the impuissance of the one, and the double proceeding of the other, lay* fair for him for occasions* to accept of peace.

These things he did wisely foresee, and did as artificially* conduct, whereby all things fell into his lap as he desired.

For as for the parliament, it presently took fire, being affectionate (of old) to the war of France, and desirous (afresh) to repair the dishonour they thought the King sustained by the loss of Brittany. Therefore they advised the King, with great alacrity to undertake the war of France. And although the parliament consisted of the first and second nobility,²⁰ together with principal citizens and townsmen, yet worthily and justly respecting more the people (whose deputies they were) than their own private persons; and finding, by the Lord Chancellor's speech,²¹ the King's inclination that way, they consented that commissioners should go forth for the gathering and levying of a Benevolence²² from the more able sort. This tax (called a Benevolence) was devised by Edward the Fourth, for which he sustained much envy.* It was abolished by Richard the Third by act of parliament, to ingratiate himself with the people, and it was now revived by the King; but with consent of parliament, for so it was not in the time of King Edward the Fourth. But by this way he raised exceeding great sums. Inasmuch as the city of London (in those days)²³ contributed nine thousand pounds and better; and that chiefly levied upon the wealthier sort. There is a tradition of a dilemma²⁴ that Bishop Morton (the

²⁰ Nobles and gentry (including knights).

²¹ A slip on Bacon's part, as Spedding pointed out (*S*, VI.121).

²² A tax or loan, so called because it was supposedly granted out of the *benevolentia* or goodwill of the giver; it differed from a forced loan in that it was regarded as a gift, not to be repaid. Polydore Vergil said that, being raised 'under the name of loving kindness . . . it could be perceived how much each person cherished the King . . . for the man who paid most was presumed to be most dutiful; many none the less grudged their contribution, so that this method of taxation might more appropriately be termed a "malevolence" rather than a "benevolence"' (ed. Hay, p. 49).

²³ Even in those days (when money was so much scarcer).

²⁴ A term in rhetoric for an argument involving an opponent in choice between two (or more) alternatives, both equally unfavourable, having two points, like the

Chancellor) used to raise up the Benevolence to higher rates; and some called it his fork, and some his crotch. For he had couched* an article in the instructions to the commissioners who were to levy the Benevolence, that if they met with any that were sparing, they should tell them that they must needs have, because they laid up;²⁵ and if they were spenders, they must needs have, because it was seen in their port* and manner of living; so neither kind came amiss.

This parliament was merely a parliament of war; for it was in substance but a declaration of war against France and Scotland,²⁶ with some statutes conducing thereunto; as the severe punishing of mort-pays²⁷ and keeping back soldiers' wages in captains;²⁸ the like severity for the departure of soldiers without licence; strengthening of the common law in favour of protections for those that were in the King's service; and the setting the gate open and wide, for men to sell or mortgage their lands without fines for alienation²⁹ to furnish themselves with money for the war; and lastly the voiding* of all Scotchmen out of England.

There was also a statute for the dispersing of the standard of the exchequer³⁰ throughout England, thereby to size* weights and measures; and two or three more of less importance.

After the parliament was broken up (which lasted not long³¹) the King went on with his preparations for the war of France; yet neglected not in the mean time the affairs of Maximilian, for the quieting of Flanders and restoring him to his authority amongst his subjects. For at that time the Lord of Ravenstein, being not only a subject rebelled but a servant revolted (and so much the more

Bishop's 'crotch', or pitch-fork. Chrimes (*Henry VII*, p. 203) cites evidence that this 'fork' antedated Morton.

²⁵ Possess money, since they were savers.

²⁶ An act passed in this year ordered all Scots who had not been made denizens to leave England within forty days.

²⁷ 'Payments for the dead': wages claimed by unscrupulous commanders for soldiers who were either dead or discharged (see Falstaff: Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, 4.2.11ff).

²⁸ Where commanders pocketed soldiers' pay.

²⁹ When landlords held land direct from the King they normally had to pay a fine for permission to sell ('alienate') it; this was now remitted, in order to raise money for the war.

³⁰ Fixed gauge to standardize weights and measures.

³¹ It dissolved in March 1492.

malicious and violent), by the aid of Bruges and Ghent had taken the town and both the castles of Sluice, as we said before. And having by the commodity* of the haven gotten together certain ships and barks*, fell to a kind of piratical trade; robbing and spoiling and taking prisoners the ships and vessels of all nations that passed amongst that coast towards the mart of Antwerp, or into any part of Brabant, Zealand, or Friesland; being ever well victualled from Picardy, besides the commodity of victuals from Sluice and the country adjacent, and the avails* of his own prizes. The French assisted him still under-hand* and he likewise (as all men do that have been on both sides) thought himself not safe except he depended upon a third person.

There was a small town some two miles from Bruges towards the sea, called Dam; which was a fort and approach to Bruges, and had a relation also to Sluice. This town the King of the Romans had attempted* often (not for any worth of the town in itself, but because it might choke Bruges, and cut it off from the sea), and ever failed. But therewith the Duke of Saxony came down into Flanders, taking upon him the person of an umpire to compose things between Maximilian and his subjects, but being (indeed) fast* and assured* to Maximilian. Upon this pretext of neutrality and treaty he repaired to Bruges, desiring of the states* of Bruges to enter peaceably into their town, with a retinue of some number of men of arms fit for his estate, being somewhat the more (as he said) the better to guard him in a country that was up in arms; and bearing them in hand³² that he was to communicate with them of divers matters of great importance for their good; which³³ having obtained of them, he sent his carriages and harbingers* before him to provide his lodging, so that his men of war entered the city in good array, but in peaceable manner, and he followed. They that went before inquired still for inns and lodgings as if they would have rested there all night, and so went on till they came to the gate that leadeth directly towards Dam; and they of Bruges only gazed upon them, and gave them passage. The captains and inhabitants of Dam also suspected no harm from any that passed through Bruges; and discovering forces afar off, supposed they had been

³² Making them believe.

³³ Permission to enter town.

some succours that were come from their friends,³⁴ knowing some dangers towards* them, and so perceiving nothing but well³⁵ till it was too late, suffered them to enter their town. By which kind of slight, rather than stratagem, the town of Dam was taken, and the town of Bruges shrewdly blocked up, whereby they took great discouragement.

The Duke of Saxony, having won the town of Dam, sent immediately to the King³⁶ to let him know that it was Sluice chiefly and the Lord Ravenstein that kept the rebellion of Flanders in life; and that if it pleased the King to besiege it by sea, he also would besiege it by land, and so cut out the core of those wars.

The King, willing to uphold the authority of Maximilian (the better to hold France in awe),³⁷ and being likewise sued unto by his merchants, for that the seas were much infested by the barks of the Lord Ravenstein, sent straightways Sir Edward Poynings, a valiant man and of good service, with twelve ships well furnished with soldiers and artillery, to clear the seas and to besiege Sluice on that part. The Englishmen did not only coop up the Lord Ravenstein, that he stirred not, and likewise held in strait* siege the maritime part of the town, but also assailed one of the castles, and renewed the assault so for twenty days' space (issuing still out of their ships at the ebb*), as they made great slaughter of them of the castle, who continually fought with them to repulse them; though of the English part also were slain a brother of the Earl of Oxford's, and some fifty more.

But the siege still continuing, more and more strait; and both the castles (which were the principal strength of the town) being distressed*, the one by the Duke of Saxony, and the other by the English; and a bridge of boats, which the Lord Ravenstein had made between both castles, whereby succours and relief might pass from the one to the other, being on a night set on fire by the English; he despairing to hold the town, yielded (at the last) the castles to the English, and the town to the Duke of Saxony, by composition*. Which done, the Duke of Saxony and Sir Edward Poynings treated

³⁴ The French.

³⁵ Nothing harmful.

³⁶ Henry.

³⁷ Restrain by fear of. (Maximilian's territory lay along the north-eastern border of France, and could be used for diversionary actions.)

with them of Bruges to submit themselves to Maximilian their lord; which after some time they did, paying (in some good part) the charge of the war, whereby the Almain* and foreign succours were dismissed. The example of Bruges other of the revolted towns followed; so that Maximilian grew to be out of danger, but (as his manner was to handle matters) never out of necessity. And Sir Edward Poynings (after he had continued at Sluice some good while, till all things were settled) returned unto the King, being then before Boulogne.

[Spanish Conquest of Granada, 1492]

Somewhat about this time¹ came letters from Ferdinando and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, signifying the final conquest of Granada from the Moors; which action, in itself so worthy, King Ferdinando (whose manner was never to lose any virtue for the shewing) had expressed and displayed in his letters at large; with all the particularities and religious punctos* and ceremonies that were observed in the reception* of that city and kingdom: shewing amongst other things, that the King would not by any means in person enter the city until he had first aloof* seen the cross set up upon the greater tower² of Granada, whereby it became Christian ground; that likewise before he would enter he did homage to God above, pronouncing by an herald from the height of that tower that he did acknowledge to have recovered that kingdom by the help of God Almighty, and the glorious Virgin, and the virtuous Apostle Saint James,³ and the holy father Innocent the Eighth, together with the aids and services of his prelates, nobles, and commons; that yet he stirred not from his camp till he had seen a little army of martyrs, to the number of seven hundred and more Christians (that had lived in bonds and servitude as slaves to the Moors), pass before his eyes, singing a psalm for their redemption; and that he had given tribute unto God, by alms and relief extended to them all for his admission into the city. These things were in the letters, with many more ceremonies of a kind of holy ostentation.

¹ April, 1492. The capture of Dam and Bruges took place between August and October.

² The Alhambra.

³ The patron saint of Spain.

The King⁴ ever willing to put himself into the consort* or quire* of all religious actions, and naturally affecting* much the King of Spain (as far as one King can affect another), partly for his virtue and partly for a counterpoise to France; upon the receipt of these letters sent all his nobles and prelates that were about the court, together with the mayor and aldermen of London, in great solemnity to the Church of Paul's, there to hear a declaration from the Lord Chancellor, now Cardinal.⁵ When they were assembled, the Cardinal, standing upon the uppermost step or half-pace* before the quire, and all the nobles, prelates, and governors of the City at the foot of the stairs, made a speech to them, letting them know that they were assembled in that consecrated place to sing unto God a new song. 'For that' (said he) 'these many years the Christians have not gained new ground or territory upon the Infidels, nor enlarged and set further the bounds of the Christian world. But this is now done by the prowess and devotion of Ferdinando and Isabella, Kings of Spain; who have to their immortal honour recovered the great and rich kingdom of Granada and the populous and mighty city of the same name from the Moors, having been in possession thereof by the space of seven hundred years and more; for which this assembly and all Christians are to render all laud and thanks unto God, and to celebrate this noble act of the King of Spain, who in this is not only victorious but apostolical,⁶ in the gaining of new provinces to the Christian faith; and the rather for that this victory and conquest is obtained without much effusion of blood; whereby it is to be hoped that there shall be gained not only new territory, but infinite souls to the church of Christ; whom the Almighty (as it seems) would have live⁷ to be converted.' Herewithal he did relate some of the most memorable particulars of the war and victory. And after his speech ended, the whole assembly went solemnly in procession, and *Te Deum* was sung.

Immediately after the solemnity, the King kept his May-day of his palace at Sheen (now Richmond); where to warm the blood of his nobility and gallants against* the war, he kept great

⁴ Henry.

⁵ Archbishop Morton, created Cardinal in 1493.

⁶ As a missionary who first plants Christianity in any region.

⁷ Wishes to keep alive.

triumphs of jousting and tourney⁸ during all that month. In which space it so fell out that Sir James Parker and Hugh Vaughan, one of the King's gentlemen ushers, having had a controversy touching certain arms⁹ that the King-at-Arms¹⁰ had given Vaughan, were appointed to run some courses* one against another; and by accident of a faulty helmet that Parker had on, he was stricken into the mouth at the first course, so that his tongue was borne unto the hinder part of his head, in such sort that he died presently upon the place; which because of the controversy precedent, and the death that followed, was accounted amongst the vulgar as a combat or trial of right.

The King towards the end of this summer, having put his forces wherewith he meant to invade France in readiness (but so as they were not yet met or mustered together), sent Urswick, now made his almoner,¹¹ and Sir John Risley to Maximilian, to let him know that he was in arms, ready to pass the seas into France, and did but expect to hear from him when and where he did appoint to join with him, according to his promise made unto him by Countebalt his ambassador.

The English ambassadors having repaired to Maximilian did find his power and promise at a very great distance,¹² he being utterly unprovided of men, money, and arms for any such enterprise. For Maximilian having neither wing to fly on, for that his patrimony of Austria was not in his hands (his father being then living), and on the other side his matrimonial territories of Flanders were partly in dower to his mother-in-law,¹³ and partly not serviceable in respect of the late rebellions, was thereby destitute of means to enter into war. The ambassadors saw this well, but wisely thought fit to advertise the King thereof rather than to return themselves, till the King's further pleasure were known; the rather, for that Maximilian himself spake as great as ever he did before, and entertained them with dilatory answers, so as the formal part of their ambassage

⁸ Martial sports, the combatants mounted in armour, fighting with blunted weapons.

⁹ Coat of arms, and hence rank or precedence.

¹⁰ Herald who regulates the nature and granting of all armorial bearings.

¹¹ Distributor of the King's alms, a prestigious court office.

¹² Far apart.

¹³ Margaret Duchess of Burgundy.

might well warrant and require their further stay.¹⁴ The King here-upon, who doubted as much before, and saw through his business from the beginning, wrote back to the ambassadors, commending their discretion in not returning and willing them to keep the state wherein they found Maximilian as a secret, till they heard further from him; and meanwhile went on with his voyage royal for France, suppressing for a time this advertisement touching Maximilian's poverty and disability.

By this time was drawn together a great and puissant army unto the city of London; in which were Thomas Marquis Dorset, Thomas Earl of Arundel, Thomas Earl of Derby, George Earl of Shrewsbury, Edmond Earl of Suffolk, Edward Earl of Devonshire, George Earl of Kent, the Earl of Essex, Thomas Earl of Ormond, with a great number of barons, knights, and principal gentlemen; and amongst them Richard Thomas, much noted for the brave troops that he brought out of Wales; the army rising in the whole to the number of five and twenty thousand foot, and sixteen hundred horse, over which the King (constant in his accustomed trust and employment) made Jasper Duke of Bedford and John Earl of Oxford generals under his own person. The ninth of September, in the eighth year of his reign, he departed from Greenwich towards the sea; all men wondering that he took that season (being so near winter) to begin the war, and some thereupon gathering it was a sign that the war would not be long. Nevertheless the King gave out the contrary, thus, that he intending not to make a summer business of it but a resolute war (without term prefixed) until he had recovered France, it skilled* not much when he began it; especially having Calais at his back, where he might winter if the reason of the war so required. The sixth of October he embarked at Sandwich; and the same day took* land at Calais, which was the rendezvous where all his forces were assigned* to meet. But in this his journey towards the sea-side, wherein for the cause that we shall now speak of he hovered so much the longer, he had received letters from the Lord Cordes (who the hotter¹⁵ he was against the English in time of war, had the more credit in a negotiation of peace, and besides was held a man open and of good faith), in which letters

¹⁴ So that as far as the forms of an embassy were concerned, they appeared to have a good reason for remaining

¹⁵ As in his words about winning Calais from the English (p. 71).

there was made an overture of peace from the French King, with such conditions as were somewhat to the King's taste; but this was carried at the first with wonderful secrecy.

The King was no sooner come to Calais but the calm winds of peace began to blow. For first the English ambassadors returned out of Flanders from Maximilian, and certified the King that he was not to hope for any aid from Maximilian, for that he was altogether unprovided. His will was good, but he lacked money. And this was made known and spread throughout the army. And although the English were therewithal nothing dismayed, and that it be the manner of soldiers upon bad news to speak the more bravely; yet nevertheless it was a kind of preparative to a peace. Instantly in the neck¹⁶ of this (as the King had laid* it) came news that Ferdinando and Isabella, Kings of Spain, had concluded a peace with King Charles, and that Charles had restored unto them the counties of Roussillon and Perpignan, which formerly were mortgaged by John King of Aragon, Ferdinando's father, unto France, for three hundred thousand crowns; which debt was also upon this peace by Charles clearly released. This came also handsomely* to put* on the peace, both because so potent a confederate¹⁷ was fallen off, and because it was a fair example of a peace bought, so as the King should not be the sole merchant in this peace. Upon these airs of peace the King was content that the Bishop of Exeter¹⁸ and the Lord Daubeney (Governor of Calais) should give a meeting unto the Lord Cordes for the treaty of a peace; but himself nevertheless and his army, the fifteenth of October, removed from Calais, and in four days' march sat him down before Boulogne.¹⁹

During this siege of Boulogne (which continued near a month) there passed no memorable action nor accident of war. Only Sir John Savage, a valiant captain, was slain, riding about the walls of the town to take a view. The town was both well fortified and well manned; yet it was distressed*, and ready for an assault;²⁰ which if it had been given (as was thought) would have cost much blood; but yet the town would have been carried* in the end.

¹⁶ Following close upon.

¹⁷ King Ferdinand of Spain

¹⁸ Richard Fox.

¹⁹ The siege began on 18 October 1492.

²⁰ In a proper state (to be assaulted).

[Peace of Etaples, 30 November 1492]

Meanwhile a peace was concluded by the commissioners, to continue for both the Kings' lives. Where there was no article of importance, being in effect rather a bargain than a treaty. For all things remained as they were, save that there should be paid to the King seven hundred forty-five thousand ducats* in present, for his charges* in that journey, and five and twenty thousand crowns¹ yearly, for his charges sustained in the aids of the Bretons. For which annual*, though he had Maximilian bound before for those charges, yet he counted the alteration of the hand² as much as the principal debt;³ and besides it was left somewhat indefinitely when it should determine* or expire, which made the English esteem it as a tribute carried* under fair terms. And the truth is, it was paid both to the King and to his son Henry the Eighth longer than it could continue upon any computation of charges. There was also assigned by the French King unto all the King's principal counselors great pensions, besides rich gifts for the present; which whether the King did permit to save his own purse from rewards, or to communicate* the envy* of a business that was displeasing to his people, was diversely interpreted; for certainly the King had no great fancy to own* this peace, and therefore a little before it was concluded he had under-hand* procured some of his best captains and men of war to advise him to a peace under their hands,⁴ in an earnest manner, in the nature of a supplication.

But the truth is, this peace was welcome to both Kings; to Charles, for that it assured unto him the possession of Brittany, and freed the enterprise of Naples; to Henry, for that it filled his coffers; and that he foresaw at that time a storm of inward troubles coming upon him, which presently after brake forth. But it gave no less discontent to the nobility and principal persons of the army, who had many of them sold or engaged* their estates upon the hopes of the war. They stuck not⁵ to say, that the King cared not to plume*

¹ About £4,300.

² Making another person than Maximilian (who was notoriously unreliable), namely the King of France, 'bound' or responsible for the payment. A 'hand' is a signature to a bond.

³ Worth as much as the whole sum.

⁴ In a written document signed by them.

⁵ Did not scruple.

his nobility and people, to feather himself. And some made themselves merry with that the King had said in parliament, that after the war was once begun, he doubted not but to make it pay itself; saying he had kept promise.

Having risen from Boulogne he went to Calais, where he stayed some time; from whence also he writ letters (which was a courtesy that he sometimes used) to the Mayor of London and the Aldermen his brethren, half bragging what great sums he had obtained for the peace, knowing well that full coffers of the King is ever good news to London; and better news it would have been, if their benevolence had been but a loan. And upon the seventeenth of September following he returned to Westminster, where he kept his Christmas.

Soon after the King's return he sent the Order of the Garter to Alphonso Duke of Calabria, eldest son to Ferdinando King of Naples. An honour sought by that Prince to hold him up in the eyes of the Italians; who, expecting the arms of Charles, made great account of the amity of England for a bridle to France. It was received by Alphonso with all the ceremony and pomp that could be devised, as things use to be⁶ carried that are intended for opinion.* It was sent by Urswick, upon whom the King bestowed this ambassage to help him after many dry* employments.

[Perkin Warbeck's Imposture as Richard Duke of York, 1491-1499]

At this time¹ the King began again to be haunted with sprites* by the magic and curious* arts of the Lady Margaret, who raised up the ghost of Richard Duke of York (second son to King Edward the Fourth) to walk* and vex the King. This was a finer counterfeit stone* than Lambert Simnel, better done, and worn upon greater hands; being graced after* with the wearing of a King of France and a King of Scotland, not of a Duchess of Burgundy only. And for Simnel, there was not much in him, more than that he was a handsome boy and did not shame his robes. But this youth of whom we are now to speak was such a mercurial*, as the like hath seldom

⁶ Are usually.

¹ Perkin Warbeck appeared in Ireland in November 1491. In 1492 he was at the court of Charles VIII in France, but the signing of the Treaty of Etaples in November obliged him to travel elsewhere for three years.

been known; and could make his own part if any time he chanced to be out.² Wherefore this being one of the strangest examples of a personation* that ever was in elder or later times, it deserveth to be discovered* and related* at the full; although the King's manner of shewing things by pieces, and dark-lights*, hath so muffled it that it hath left it almost as a mystery to this day.

The Lady Margaret, whom the King's friends called Juno because she was to him as Juno was to Æneas,³ stirring both heaven and hell to do him mischief, for a foundation of her particular practices* against him did continually by all means possible nourish, maintain, and divulge* the flying* opinion that Richard Duke of York (second son to Edward the Fourth) was not murdered in the Tower (as was given out) but saved alive; for that those who were employed in that barbarous fact*, having destroyed the elder brother were stricken with remorse and compassion towards the younger, and set him privily at liberty to seek his fortune. This lure* she cast abroad, thinking that this fame* and belief (together with the fresh example of Lambert Simnel) would draw at one time or other some birds to strike upon it. She used likewise a further diligence*, not committing all to chance: for she had some secret espials* (like to the Turks' commissioners, for children of tribute⁴) to look abroad for handsome and graceful youths to make Plantagenets and Dukes of York. At the last she did light on one in whom all things met as one would wish, to serve her turn for a counterfeit of Richard Duke of York.

This was Perkin Warbeck, whose adventures we shall now describe. For first, the years⁵ agreed well. Secondly, he was a youth of fine favour* and shape; but more than that, he had such a crafty and bewitching fashion both to move pity and to induce belief, as was like a kind of fascination* and enchantment to those that saw him or heard him. Thirdly, he had been from his childhood such a wanderer or (as the King called it) such a landloper*, as it was extreme hard to hunt out his nest and parents; neither again could

² Could invent his own role, if he forgot his lines.

³ In Virgil's *Aeneid* that goddess is an enemy of the hero, constantly thwarting him.

⁴ 'The Turks levied a tribute of children from the Christian inhabitants of conquered territories, and trained them as soldiers' (ed. Lockyer).

⁵ Respective ages.

any man by company or conversing with him be able to say or detect well what he was, he did so flit from place to place. Lastly, there was a circumstance (which is mentioned by one that writ* in the same time) that is very likely to have made somewhat to^b the matter; which is, that King Edward the Fourth was his godfather. Which, as it is somewhat suspicious for a wanton* prince to become gossip* in so mean a house, and might make a man think that he might indeed have in him some base* blood of the house of York; so at the least (though that were not) it might give the occasion to the boy, in being called King Edward's godson, or perhaps in sport* King Edward's son, to entertain such thoughts into his head. For tutor he had none (for* ought that appears), as Lambert Simnel had, until he came unto the Lady Margaret who instructed him.

Thus therefore it came to pass. There was a townsman of Tournay that had borne office in that town, whose name was John Osbeck (a converted Jew⁷), married to Katherine de Faro, whose business drew him to live for a time with his wife at London in King Edward the Fourth's days. During which time he had a son by her; and being known in court, the King either out of religious nobleness, because he was a convert, or upon some private acquaintance, did him the honour as to be godfather to his child, and named him Peter. But afterwards proving a dainty and effeminate youth, he was commonly called by the diminutive of his name, Peterkin, or Perkin. For as for the name of Warbeck, it was given him when they did but guess at it, before examinations had been taken.⁸ But yet he had been so much talked on by that name, as it stuck by him after his true name of Osbeck was known. While he was a young child, his parents returned with him to Tournay. Then was he placed in a house of a kinsman of his, called John Stenbeck, at Antwerp, and so roamed up and down between Antwerp and

* Contributed to, helped on.

⁷ Bacon reproduces Speed's misunderstanding of André, who states that Perkin was brought up by a converted Jew named Edward (who was in fact the godson of Edward IV), not that he was his son. Warbeck was the son of John Osbeck or De Werbecque, controller of Tournay. He was employed as page to the wife of Sir Edward Brampton, a converted Portuguese Jew (who had risen high in Yorkist favour under Edward IV and Richard III, but who fled England after Bosworth), from whom he could have learned much about the real Duke of York. Cf. Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 81ff, and Cecil Roth, 'Perkin Warbeck and his Jewish master', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 9 (1922), 143-62.

⁸ Before enquiries had been made.

Tournay and other towns of Flanders for a good time; living much in English company, and having the English tongue perfect.

In which time, being grown a comely youth, he was brought by some of the espials* of the Lady Margaret into her presence; who, viewing him well, and seeing that he had a face and personage* that would bear a noble fortune, and finding him otherwise of a fine spirit and winning behaviour, thought she had now found a curious* piece of marble to carve out an image of a Duke of York. She kept him by her a great while, but with extreme secrecy. The while⁹ she instructed him by many cabinet conferences,¹⁰ first, in princely behaviour and gesture, teaching him how he should keep state,¹¹ and yet with a modest sense of his misfortunes. Then she informed him of all the circumstances and particulars that concerned the person of Richard Duke of York, which he was to act; describing unto him the personages, lineaments*, and features of the King and Queen his pretended parents, and of his brother and sisters, and divers others that were nearest him in his childhood, together with all passages*, some secret, some common, that were fit for a child's memory, until the death of King Edward. Then she added the particulars of the time from the King's death until he and his brother were committed to the Tower, as well during the time he was abroad as while he was in sanctuary.* As for the times while he was in the Tower, and the manner of his brother's death and his own escape, she knew they were things that a very few could control.¹² And therefore she taught him only to tell a smooth and likely tale of those matters, warning him not to vary from it.

It was agreed likewise between them what account he should give of his peregrination abroad, intermixing many things which were true and such as they knew others could testify, for the credit of the rest, but still making them to hang together with the part he was to play. She taught him likewise how to avoid sundry captious* and tempting* questions, which were like* to be asked of him. But in this she found him of himself so nimble* and shifting* as she trusted much to his own wit and readiness, and therefore laboured the less in it. Lastly, she raised his thoughts with some present

⁹ In the meantime

¹⁰ Secret meetings.

¹¹ Behave in a stately manner.

¹² Few people could correct him in.

rewards and further promises, setting before him chiefly the glory and fortune of a crown if things went well, and a sure refuge to her court if the worst should fall.

After such time as she thought he was perfect in his lesson she began to cast* with herself from what coast this blazing star¹³ should first appear, and at what time. It must be upon the horizon of Ireland; for there had the like¹⁴ meteor strong influence¹⁵ before. The time of the apparition to be when the King should be engaged into a war with France. But well she knew that whatsoever should come from her would be held suspected. And therefore, if he should go out of Flanders immediately into Ireland, she might be thought to have some hand in it. And besides, the time was not yet ripe, for that the two Kings were then upon terms of peace. Therefore she wheeled* about, and to put all suspicion afar off, and loth to keep him any longer by her (for that she knew secrets are not long-lived), she sent him unknown into Portugal, with the Lady Brampton, an English lady that embarked for Portugal at that time, with some *privado** of her own to have an eye upon him; and there he was to remain and to expect her further directions. In the mean time she omitted not to prepare things for his better welcome and accepting, not only in the kingdom of Ireland, but in the court of France. He continued in Portugal about a year; and by that time¹⁶ the King of England called his parliament (as hath been said), and had declared open war against France.

Now did the sign reign, and the constellation¹⁷ was comen under which Perkin should appear. And therefore he was straight sent unto by the Duchess to go for Ireland, according to the first designment.* In Ireland he did arrive at the town of Cork. When he was thither comen his own tale was (when he made his confession afterwards) that the Irishmen finding him in some good clothes, came flocking about him, and bore him down¹⁸ that he was the Duke of Clarence that had been there before; and after, that he was Richard the Third's base* son; and lastly, that he was Richard Duke

¹³ Comet; thought in the Renaissance to be a bad omen.

¹⁴ Similar (i.e. Lambert Simnel).

¹⁵ Domination; a metaphor from astrology.

¹⁶ October–November 1491.

¹⁷ Astrological terms for parts of the zodiac, thought to have power over human affairs.

¹⁸ Insisted.

of York, second son to Edward the Fourth. But that he for his part renounced all these things, and offered to swear upon the holy Evangelists that he was no such man, till at last they forced it upon him and bad* him fear nothing; and so forth. But the truth is that immediately upon his coming into Ireland he took upon him the said person* of the Duke of York, and drew unto him complices* and partakers by all the means he could devise. Insomuch as he writ his letters unto the Earls of Desmond and Kildare to come in to his aid and be of his party, the originals of which letters are yet extant.¹⁹

Somewhat before this time the Duchess had also gained unto her a near servant of King Henry's own, one Stephen Fryon, his secretary for the French tongue; an active man, but turbulent and discontented. This Fryon had fled over to Charles the French King, and put himself into his service at such time as he²⁰ began to be in open enmity with the King.²¹ Now King Charles, when he understood of the person and attempts* of Perkin, ready of himself to embrace all advantages against the King of England, instigated* by Fryon, and formerly prepared by the Lady Margaret, forthwith* despatched one Lucas and this Fryon in nature of ambassadors to Perkin, to advertise him of the King's good inclination to him, and that he²² was resolved to aid him to recover his right against King Henry, an usurper of England and an enemy of France; and wished him to come over unto him at Paris.

Perkin thought himself in heaven, now that he was invited by so great a King in so honourable a manner. And imparting* unto his friends in Ireland for their encouragement how fortune called him, and what great hopes he had, sailed presently into France. When he was comen to the court of France the King received him with great honour, saluted and styled him by the name of the Duke of York, lodged him and accommodated him in great state; and the better to give him the representation and the countenance of a Prince, assigned him a guard for his person, whereof the Lord Congresall was captain. And the courtiers likewise (though it be ill mocking with the French²³) applied themselves to their King's

¹⁹ As Spedding noted (*S*, vi 137), these are no longer extant, but they are referred to in the *Treasure Books of Scotland*.

²⁰ Charles VIII, King of France. Fryon left Henry's service in 1490.

²¹ Henry.

²² King Charles.

²³ Though they are not good at playing a part.

bent*, seeing there was reason* of state for it. At the same time there repaired* unto Perkin divers Englishmen of quality*; Sir George Neville, Sir John Taylor, and about one hundred more; and amongst the rest, this Stephen Fryon of whom we spake, who followed his²⁴ fortune both then and for a long time after, and was indeed his principal counsellor and instrument in all his proceedings.

But all this on the French King's part was but a trick, the better to bow* King Henry to peace. And therefore upon the first grain of incense that was sacrificed upon the altar of peace at Boulogne, Perkin was smoked away.* Yet would not the French King deliver him up to King Henry (as he was laboured* to do), for his honour's sake, but warned him away and dismissed him. And Perkin on his part was as ready to be gone, doubting* he might be caught up under-hand.* He therefore took his way into Flanders unto the Duchess of Burgundy, pretending that having been variously tossed by fortune he directed his course thither as to a safe harbour; no ways taking knowledge²⁵ that he had ever been there before, but as if that had been his first address.* The Duchess on the other part made it as new and strange to see him; and pretending at the first²⁶ she was taught and made wise by the example of Lambert Simnel, how she did admit* of any counterfeit stuff, though even in that²⁷ she said she was not fully satisfied, she pretended at the first (and that was ever in the presence of others) to pose* him and sift* him, thereby to try whether he were indeed the very Duke of York or no. But seeming to receive full satisfaction by his answers, then she feigned herself to be transported with a kind of astonishment, mixt of joy and wonder, of his miraculous deliverance*, receiving him as if he were risen from death to life; and inferring* that God, who had in such wonderful manner preserved him from death, did likewise reserve him for some great and prosperous fortune. As for his dismissal out of France, they interpreted it not as if he were detected or neglected for a counterfeit deceiver, but contrariwise, that it did shew manifestly unto the world that he was some great matter*, for that it was his abandoning that (in effect) made the

²⁴ Perkin's.

²⁵ Letting it be known.

²⁶ From the beginning.

²⁷ Even in the case of Simnel.

peace; being no more but the sacrificing of a poor distressed Prince unto the utility and ambition of two mighty monarchs.

Neither was Perkin for his part wanting* to himself either in gracious and princely behaviour, or in ready and apposite* answers, or in contenting and caressing* those that did apply* themselves unto him, or in pretty scorns or disdains to those that seemed to doubt of him; but in all things did notably acquit* himself: inso-much as it was generally believed, as well amongst great persons as amongst the vulgar, that he was indeed Duke Richard. Nay himself, with long and continual counterfeiting and with often telling a lie, was turned (by habit) almost into the thing he seemed to be, and from a liar to a believer. The Duchess therefore, as in a case out of* doubt, did him all princely honour, calling him always by the name of her nephew, and giving him the delicate title of the White Rose of England; and appointed him a guard of thirty persons, halberdiers, clad* in a party-coloured livery of murrey and blue,²⁸ to attend his person. Her court likewise, and generally the Dutch and strangers*, in their usage towards him expressed no less respect.

The news hereof came blazing and thundering over into England, that the Duke of York was sure alive. As for the name of Perkin Warbeck, it was not at that time comen to light, but all the news ran upon the Duke of York, that he had been entertained in Ireland, bought and sold in France, and was now plainly avowed* and in great honour in Flanders. These fames* took hold of divers; in some upon discontent, in some upon ambition, in some upon levity* and desire of change, and in some few upon conscience and belief, but in most upon simplicity*, and in divers out of dependence upon some of the better sort²⁹ who did in secret favour and nourish these bruits.* And it was not long ere these rumours of novelty had begotten others of scandal and murmur against the King and his government, taxing* him for a great taxer of his people and discountenancer* of his nobility. The loss of Brittany and the peace with France were not forgotten; but chiefly they fell upon the wrong that he did his Queen, and that he did not reign in her right, wherefore they said that God had now brought to light a masculine branch of the house of York that would not be at his courtesy,³⁰ howsoever

²⁸ Variegated uniform, of mulberry (purple-red) and blue.

²⁹ Nobility.

³⁰ At his sufferance.

he did depress* his poor lady. And yet (as it fareth in things which are current with the multitude, and which they affect) these fames grew so general as the authors were lost in the generality of speakers; they being like running weeds that have no certain root, or like footings up and down³¹ impossible to be traced.

But after a while these ill humours drew to an head,³² and settled secretly in some eminent persons; which were Sir William Stanley, Lord Chamberlain of the King's household, the Lord Fitzwater, Sir Symon Mountford, Sir Thomas Thwaites. These entered into a secret conspiracy to favour Duke Richard's title; nevertheless none engaged their fortunes in this business openly but two, Sir Robert Clifford and master William Barley, who sailed over into Flanders, sent indeed from the party of the conspirators here to understand the truth of those things that passed there, and not without some help of moneys from hence, provisionally to be delivered – if they found and were satisfied that there was truth in these pretences. The person of Sir Robert Clifford (being a gentleman of fame and family) was extremely welcome to the Lady Margaret, who after she had conference with him brought him to the sight of Perkin, with whom he had often speech and discourse. So that in the end, won either by the Duchess to affect* or by Perkin to believe, he wrote back into England that he knew the person of Richard Duke of York as well as he knew his own, and that this young man was undoubtedly he. By this means all things grew prepared to revolt and sedition here, and the conspiracy came to have a correspondence³³ between Flanders and England.

The King on his part was not asleep. But to arm or levy forces yet, he thought he would but show fear, and do this idol too much worship. Nevertheless the ports he did shut up, or at least kept a watch on them, that none should pass to or fro that was suspected. But for the rest he chose to work by countermine.* His purposes were two; the one to lay open the abuse*, the other to break the knot* of the conspirators. To detect the abuse, there were but two ways: the first to make it manifest to the world that the Duke of York was indeed murdered; the other to prove that, were he dead or alive, yet Perkin was a counterfeit. For the first, thus it stood.

³¹ Muddled-up footprints.

³² Gathered to a climax.

³³ The conspirators set up channels of communication.

There were but four persons that could speak upon knowledge to the murder of the Duke of York: Sir James Tyrell (the employed-man from King Richard), John Dighton and Myles Forrest his servants (the two butchers* or tormentors), and the priest of the Tower that buried them. Of which four, Myles Forrest and the priest were dead, and there remained alive only Sir James Tyrell and John Dighton. These two the King caused to be committed to the Tower and examined touching the manner of the death of the two innocent princes.³⁴

They agreed both in a tale (as the King gave out) to this effect: that King Richard having directed his warrant* for the putting of them to death to Brackenbury,³⁵ the Lieutenant of the Tower, was by him refused. Whereupon the King directed his warrant to Sir James Tyrell to receive the keys of the Tower from the lieutenant (for the space of a night) for the King's especial service. That Sir James Tyrell accordingly repaired* to the Tower by night, attended by his two servants afore-named, whom he had chosen for the purpose. That himself stood at the stair-foot and sent these two villains to execute the murder. That they smothered* them in their bed; and, that done, called up their master to see the naked bodies dead, which they had laid forth. That they were buried under the stairs, and some stones cast upon them. That when the report was made to King Richard that his will was done, he gave Sir James Tyrell great thanks, but took exception³⁶ to the place of their burial, being too base for them that were King's children. Whereupon another night, by the King's warrant renewed, their bodies were removed by the priest of the Tower, and buried by him in some place which, by means³⁷ of the priest's death soon after, could not be known. Thus much was then delivered abroad,³⁸ to be the effect of those examinations, but the King nevertheless made no use of them in any of his declarations. Whereby, as it seems, those examinations left the business somewhat perplexed.* And as for Sir James Tyrell,

³⁴ As Spedding notes (*S*, VI.141), Bacon is the only historian to place their examination at this point.

³⁵ The following narrative is taken from More's *Life of Richard III*, one of the main sources for Shakespeare's play.

³⁶ Was offended by.

³⁷ By reason.

³⁸ Published.

he was long after³⁹ beheaded in the Tower-yard for other matters of treason. But John Dighton, who it seemeth spake best for the King, was forthwith set at liberty, and was the principal means of divulging* this tradition.*

Therefore this kind of proof being left so naked, the King used the more diligence in the latter for the tracing of Perkin. To this purpose he sent abroad into several parts, and especially into Flanders, divers secret and nimble* scouts⁴⁰ and spies, some feigning themselves to fly over unto Perkin and to adhere unto him, and some under other pretences to learn, search, and discover all the circumstances and particulars of Perkin's parents, birth, person, travels up and down, and in brief, to have a journal⁴¹ (as it were) of his life and doings; and furnished these his employed-men liberally with money to draw on and reward intelligences*, giving them also in charge to advertise⁴² continually what they found, and nevertheless still to go on. And ever as one advertisement* and discovery called up another, he employed other new men where the business did require it.

Others he employed in a more special nature and trust, to be his pioneers⁴³ in the main countermine. These were directed to insinuate themselves into the familiarity and confidence of the principal persons of the party in Flanders, and so to learn what associates they had and correspondents, either here in England or abroad, and how far every one was engaged, and what new ones they meant afterwards to try* or board*; and as this for the persons, so for the actions themselves, to discover to the bottom (as they could) the utmost of Perkin and the conspirators their intentions, hopes, and practices. These latter best betrust* spies had some of them further instructions, to practise* and draw off* the best friends and servants of Perkin by making remonstrance⁴⁴ to them how weakly his enterprise and hopes were built, and with how prudent and potent a King they had to deal; and to reconcile them to the King with

³⁹ Tyrell was beheaded in May 1502. On the dubious evidence for his confession see Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 93.

⁴⁰ Person sent out ahead of a main force to obtain information about the enemy's position, strength, etc.

⁴¹ Day-to-day account.

⁴² Report back (to the King).

⁴³ Diggers, miners; associates in the counterplot.

⁴⁴ Making evident, plain

promise of pardon and good conditions of reward. And above the rest⁴⁵ to assail, sap*, and work* into the constancy of Sir Robert Clifford, and to win him (if they could), being the man that knew most of their secrets, and who being won away would most appall* and discourage the rest, and in a manner break the knot.

There is a strange tradition* that the King, lost in a wood of suspicions, and not knowing whom to trust, had both intelligence with⁴⁶ the confessors and chaplains of divers great men; and for the better credit of his espials* abroad with the contrary side, did use to have them cursed at Paul's (by name) amongst the bead-roll of the King's enemies,⁴⁷ according to the custom of those times. These spials plied their charge⁴⁸ so roundly*, as the King had an anatomy⁴⁹ of Perkin alive, and was likewise well informed of the particular correspondent conspirators in England, and many other mysteries were revealed; and Sir Robert Clifford in especial won to be assured⁵⁰ to the King, and industrious and officious* for his service. The King therefore, receiving a rich return* of his diligence, and great satisfaction touching a number of particulars, first divulged and spread abroad the imposture and juggling* of Perkin's person and travels, with the circumstances thereof, throughout the realm; not by proclamation (because things were yet in examination, and so might receive the more or the less⁵¹), but by court-fames,⁵² which commonly print⁵³ better than printed proclamations. Then thought he it also time to send an ambassage unto Archduke Philip⁵⁴ into Flanders for the abandoning and dismissing of Perkin. Herein he employed Sir Edward Poynings and Sir William Warham,⁵⁵ doctor of the canon law. The Archduke was then young and governed by

⁴⁵ Above all.

⁴⁶ Entered into secret correspondence with.

⁴⁷ Had their names (although employed by the King) put on the list of those to be publicly cursed as enemies of the crown. (Normally, a 'bead-roll' is a prayer-list.) Bacon is the only historian to mention this point.

⁴⁸ Performed their task.

⁴⁹ Exact account (dissections were performed on dead bodies).

⁵⁰ Gained as supporter.

⁵¹ Be either confirmed or weakened (by further enquiry).

⁵² Rumours spread at court.

⁵³ Sink into men's minds.

⁵⁴ Son of Maximilian, who had become Emperor of Germany in 1493.

⁵⁵ William Warham (1450-1532), a lawyer and diplomat, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1503, and was chancellor from 1504 to 1515, when he was displaced by Wolsey.

his council, before whom the ambassadors had audience. And Dr Warham spake in this manner:

'My lords, the King our master is very sorry that England and your country here of Flanders, having been counted as man and wife for so long time, now this country of all others should be the stage where a base counterfeit should play the part of a King of England, not only to his Grace's disquiet and dishonour but to the scorn and reproach of all sovereign Princes. To counterfeit the dead image of a King in his coin* is an high offence by all laws. But to counterfeit the living image of a King in his person exceedeth all falsifications, except it should be that of a Mahomet or an Antichrist,⁵⁶ that counterfeit divine honour. The King hath too great an opinion of this sage* council to think that any of you is caught with* this fable (though way may be given by you⁵⁷ to the passion of some), the thing in itself is so improbable. To set testimonies aside of the death of Duke Richard, which the King hath upon record plain and infallible, because they may be thought to be in the King's own power,⁵⁸ let the thing testify for itself. Sense and reason no power can command. Is it possible (trow you⁵⁹) that King Richard should damn his soul and foul his name with so abominable a murder, and yet not mend his case?⁶⁰ Or do you think that men of blood⁶¹ (that were his instruments) did turn to pity in the midst of their execution? whereas in cruel and savage beasts, and men also, the first draught of blood doth yet make them more fierce and enraged. Do you not know that the bloody executioners of tyrants do go to such errands with an halter* about their neck, so that if they perform not they are sure to die for it? And do you think that these men would hazard their own lives for sparing another's? Admit they should have saved him, what should they have done with him? Turn him into London streets? that the watchmen, or any passenger that should light upon him, might carry him before a justice, and so all come to light? Or should they have kept him

⁵⁶ A great personal opponent of Christ, expected by the early Church to appear before the end of the world.

⁵⁷ You may be misled by.

⁵⁸ Invented by the King, therefore untrustworthy.

⁵⁹ Do you think?

⁶⁰ Perfect his cause.

⁶¹ Murderers.

by them secretly? That surely would have required a great deal of care, charge*, and continual fears.

'But, my lords, I labour too much in a clear* business. The King is so wise, and hath so good friends abroad, as now he knoweth Duke Perkin from his cradle. And because he is a great Prince, if you have any good poet here, he can help him with notes to write his life, and to parallel⁶² him with Lambert Simnel, now the King's falconer. And therefore, to speak plainly to your lordships, it is the strangest thing in the world that the Lady Margaret (excuse us if we name her, whose malice to the King is both causeless and endless), should now when she is old, at the time when other women give over child-bearing, bring forth two such monsters, being not the births of nine or ten months but of many years. And whereas other natural mothers bring forth children weak, and not able to help themselves, she bringeth forth tall striplings*, able soon after their coming into the world to bid battle to mighty Kings. My lords, we stay* unwillingly upon this part: we would to God that lady would once taste the joys which God Almighty doth serve up unto her, in beholding her niece⁶³ to reign in such honour and with so much royal issue, which she might be pleased to account as her own. The King's request unto the Archduke and your lordships might be, that according to the example of King Charles, who hath already discarded him, you would banish this unworthy fellow out of your dominions. But because the King may justly expect more from an ancient confederate than from a new* reconciled enemy, he maketh it his request unto you to deliver him up into his hands: pirates and impostors of this sort being fit to be accounted the common enemies of mankind, and no ways to be protected by the law of nations.'

After some time of deliberation, the ambassadors received this short answer: 'That the Archduke, for the love of King Henry, would in no sort aid or assist the pretended Duke, but in all things conserve the amity he had with the King. But for the Duchess Dowager, she was absolute* in the lands of her dowry, and that he could not let her to dispose⁶⁴ of her own.'

⁶² Plutarch's famous collection of classical biographies was called *The Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans*.

⁶³ Elizabeth, wife of Henry VII.

⁶⁴ Prevent her from disposing.

The King, upon the return of the ambassadors, was nothing satisfied with this answer: for well he knew that a patrimonial dowry⁶⁵ carried no part of sovereignty or command of forces.⁶⁶ Besides, the ambassadors told him plainly that they saw the Duchess had a great party⁶⁷ in the Archduke's counsel; and that howsoever* it was carried in a course of connivance,⁶⁸ yet the Archduke under-hand* gave aid and furtherance to Perkin. Wherefore (partly out of courage* and partly out of policy) the King forthwith banished all Flemings, as well their persons as their wares, out of his kingdom; commanding his subjects likewise, and by name his Merchants Adventurers, which had a residence* in Antwerp to return, translating* the mart (which commonly followed the English cloth) unto Calais, and embarras* also all further trade⁶⁹ for the future. This the King did, being sensible* in point of honour not to suffer a pretender to the crown of England to affront* him so near at hand, and he⁷⁰ to keep terms of friendship with the country where he⁷¹ did set up. But he had also a further reach* ; for that he knew well that the subjects of Flanders drew so great commodity* from the trade of⁷² England as by this embargo they would soon wax weary of Perkin, and that the tumults of Flanders had been so late and fresh as it was no time for the Prince to displease the people. Nevertheless for form's sake, by way of requital*, the Archduke did likewise banish the English out of Flanders; which in effect was done to his hand.⁷³

The King, being well advertised that Perkin did more trust upon friends and partakers within the realm than upon foreign arms, thought it behoved him to apply the remedy where the disease lay, and to proceed with severity against some of the principal conspirators here within the realm, thereby to purge the ill humours in England and to cool the hopes in Flanders. Wherefore he caused to

⁶⁵ The Latin version corrects both the MS and 1622 text by reading 'matrimonial' (Margaret derived her property and rights through marriage).

⁶⁶ Did not give her the rights of a sovereign to command armed forces.

⁶⁷ Many supporters.

⁶⁸ Although the Archduke only pretended to connive at the entertainment of Warbeck.

⁶⁹ Between the English and the Flemings. Henry's trade embargo, intended to damage Maximilian, severely harmed the Merchant Adventurers' company.

⁷⁰ The King.

⁷¹ Perkin

⁷² With

⁷³ Already by the King's previous command to them to withdraw.

be apprehended*, almost at an instant, John Ratcliffe Lord Fitzwater, Sir Symon Mountford, Sir Thomas Thwaites, William Dawbeney, Robert Ratcliffe, Thomas Chressenor, and Thomas Astwood. All these were arraigned*, convicted, and condemned for high treason, in adhering and promising aid to Perkin. Of these the Lord Fitzwater was conveyed to Calais, and there kept in hold* and in hope of life, until soon after (either impatient or betrayed) he dealt with⁷⁴ his keeper to have escaped, and thereupon was beheaded. But Sir Symon Mountford, Robert Ratcliffe, and William Dawbeney, were beheaded immediately after their condemnation. The rest were pardoned, together with many others, clerks and laics,⁷⁵ amongst which were two Dominican friars, and William Worseley Dean of Paul's; which latter sort passed* examination, but came not to public trial.

The Lord Chamberlain⁷⁶ at that time was not touched*; whether it were that the King would not stir too many humours at once, but, after the manner of good physicians, purge⁷⁷ the head last; or that Clifford (from whom most of these discoveries came) reserved that piece* for his own coming over;⁷⁸ signifying only to the King in the mean time that he doubted there were some greater ones in the business, whereof he would give the King farther account when he came to his presence.

Upon Allhallows-day-even,⁷⁹ being now the tenth year of the King's reign, the King's second son Henry⁸⁰ was created Duke of York; and as well the Duke as divers others, noblemen, knights-bachelors,⁸¹ and gentlemen of quality, were made Knights of the Bath according to the ceremony.⁸² Upon the morrow after Twelfth-day,⁸³ the King removed from Westminster (where he had kept his Christmas) to the Tower of London. This he did as soon as he had advertisement that Sir Robert Clifford (in whose bosom or budget*

⁷⁴ Tried to corrupt.

⁷⁵ Clergymen and laymen.

⁷⁶ Sir William Stanley: see next paragraph.

⁷⁷ Purify (often by drawing blood).

⁷⁸ And for his best advantage, as the Latin text puts it.

⁷⁹ The evening before All Saints day (1 November 1494).

⁸⁰ Then aged four, the future Henry VIII (after his brother Arthur's death).

⁸¹ Lower order of knighthood than knights-bannerets, not belonging to a specific order.

⁸² With the usual rites and ceremonies.

⁸³ The twelfth day after Christmas, 6 January.

most of Perkin's secrets were laid up) was comen into England. And the place of the Tower was chosen to that end, that if Clifford should accuse any of the great ones, they might without suspicion or noise or sending abroad of warrants be presently attached;⁸⁴ the court and prison being within the cincture* of one wall. After a day or two the King drew unto him a selected council, and admitted Clifford to his presence, who first fell down at his feet, and in all humble manner craved the King's pardon; which the King then granted, though he were indeed secretly assured of his life⁸⁵ before. Then, commanded to tell his knowledge, he did amongst many others (of himself not interrogated) impeach* Sir William Stanley, the Lord Chamberlain of the King's household.

The King seemed to be much amazed at the naming of this lord, as if he had heard the news of some strange and fearful prodigy. To hear a man that had done him service of so high a nature as to save his life and set the crown upon his head; a man that enjoyed by his favour and advancement so great a fortune both in honour and riches; a man that was tied unto him in so near a band of alliance, his brother having married the King's mother; and lastly a man to whom he had committed the trust of his person, in making him his chamberlain: that this man, no ways disgraced, no ways discontent, no ways put in fear, should be false unto him. Clifford was required to say over again and again the particulars of his accusation; being warned that in a matter so unlikely, and that concerned so great a servant of the King's, he should not in any wise go too far. But the King finding that he did sadly* and constantly, without hesitation or varying, and with those civil protestations that were fit, stand* to that that he had said, offering to justify it upon his soul and life, he caused him to be removed. And after he had not a little bemoaned himself unto his council there present, gave order that Sir William Stanley should be restrained in his own chamber, where he lay⁸⁶ before, in the square tower.⁸⁷ And the next day he was examined by the lords.

Upon his examination he denied little of that wherewith he was charged, nor endeavoured much to excuse or extenuate* his fault.

⁸⁴ Immediately arrested.

⁸⁵ Pardoned (on 22 December 1494).

⁸⁶ Was living.

⁸⁷ The White Tower, in the Tower of London.

So that (not very wisely), thinking to make his offence less by confession he made it enough for condemnation. It was conceived that he trusted much to his former merits and the interest that his brother had in the King. But those helps were over-weighed* by divers things that made against him, and were predominant in the King's nature and mind. First, an over-merit;⁸⁸ for convenient merit, unto which reward may easily reach, doth best with Kings. Next, the sense of his power; for the King thought that he that could set him up was the more dangerous⁸⁹ to pull him down. Thirdly, the glimmering of a confiscation;⁹⁰ for he was the richest subject for value in the kingdom; there being found in his castle of Holte forty thousand marks* in ready money and plate*, besides jewels, household-stuff, stocks* upon his grounds, and other personal estate exceeding great; and for his revenue in land and fee*, it was three thousand pounds a year of old rent,⁹¹ a great matter* in those times. Lastly, the nature of the time; for if the King had been out of fear of his own estate it was not unlike* he would have spared his life, but the cloud of so great a rebellion hanging over his head made him work sure.⁹² Wherefore after some six weeks' distance of time, which the King did honourably interpose, both to give space to his brother's intercession, and to shew to the world that he had a conflict with himself what he should do, he was arraigned of high-treason and condemned, and presently after beheaded.

It is yet to this day left but in dark memory both what the case* of this noble person was, for which he suffered; and what likewise was the ground and cause of his defection* and alienation of his heart from the King. His case was said to be this, that in discourse between Sir Robert Clifford and him he had said that if he were sure that that young man were King Edward's son, he would never bear arms against him. This case seems somewhat a hard⁹³ case, both in respect of the conditional,⁹⁴ and in respect of the other

⁸⁸ Desert so great that no reward can repay it.

⁸⁹ To be feared.

⁹⁰ The possibility of seizing [Stanley's] property. Over £9,000 in cash and jewels were obtained, together with much land (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 207, 248).

⁹¹ Based on old valuations, now worth more.

⁹² Leave no chance for failure.

⁹³ Difficult to understand.

⁹⁴ The conditional particle 'if'.

words. But for⁹⁵ the conditional, it seemeth the judges of that time (who were learned men, and the three chief of them of the privy council) thought it was a dangerous thing to admit *If*s and *And*s to qualify words of treason; whereby every man might express his malice, and blanch* his danger. And it was like to the case (in the following times) of Elizabeth Barton, the holy maid of Kent, who had said that if King Henry the Eighth did not take Catherine his wife again, he should be deprived of his crown, and die the death of a dog. And infinite cases may be put of like nature, which it seemeth the grave judges taking into consideration, would not admit of treasons upon condition.⁹⁶ And as for the positive words, that he would not bear arms against King Edward's son; though the words seem calm, yet it was a plain and direct over-ruling* of the King's title, either by the line of Lancaster or by act of parliament, which no doubt pierced the King more than if Stanley had charged his lance upon him in the field. For if Stanley would hold that opinion, that a son of King Edward had still the better right, he being so principal a person of authority and favour about the King, it was to teach all England to say as much. And therefore, as those times were⁹⁷ that speech touched the quick.⁹⁸ But some writers do put this out of doubt; for they say that Stanley did expressly promise to aid Perkin, and sent him some help of treasure.

Now for the motive of his falling off from the King. It is true that at Bosworth field the King was beset, and in a manner inclosed round about by the troops of King Richard, and in manifest danger of his life when this Stanley was sent by his brother with three thousand men to his rescue, which he performed so, that King Richard was slain upon the place. So as the condition of mortal men is not capable of a greater benefit than the King received by the hands of Stanley, being like the benefit of Christ, at once to save and crown. For which service the King gave him great gifts, made him his counsellor and chamberlain; and (somewhat contrary to his nature) had winked at* the great spoils* of Bosworth-field, which came almost wholly to this man's hands, to his infinite enriching. Yet nevertheless, blown up with the conceit of his merit, he did not

⁹⁵ As regards.

⁹⁶ Allow a transitional clause to protect a treasonal utterance.

⁹⁷ Considering their unsettled nature.

⁹⁸ Hurt the very centre of his feelings.

think he had received good measure from the King, at least not pressing-down and running over,⁹⁹ as he expected. And his ambition was so exorbitant and unbounded as he became suitor to the King for the Earldom of Chester, which ever being a kind of appanage¹⁰⁰ to the principality of Wales, and using to go to the King's son, his suit did not only end in a denial but in a distaste*; the King perceiving thereby that his desires were intemperate and his cogitations vast and irregular, and that his former benefits were but cheap and lightly regarded by him. Wherefore the King began not to brook* him well; and as a little leaven of new distaste doth commonly sour the whole lump of former merits, the king's wit* began now to suggest unto his passion* that Stanley at Bosworth-field, though he came time enough to save his life, yet he stayed* long enough to endanger it. But yet having no matter* against him, he continued him in his places until this his fall.

After him was made Lord Chamberlain Giles Lord Daubeney, a man of great sufficiency and valour, the more¹⁰¹ because he was gentle and moderate.

There was a common opinion that Sir Robert Clifford (who now was becomen the state-informer) was from the beginning an emissary and spy of the King's; and that he fled over into Flanders with his consent and privity.* But this is not probable; both because he never recovered that degree of grace which he had with the King before his going over, and chiefly for that the discovery which he had made touching the Lord Chamberlain (which was his great service) grew not from anything he learned abroad, for that he knew it well before he went.

These executions, and specially that of the Lord Chamberlain, which was the chief strength of the party and by means of Sir Robert Clifford who was the most inward* man of trust amongst them, did extremely quail* the design of Perkin and his complices, as well through discouragement as distrust. So that they were now like sand without lime,¹⁰² ill bound together;¹⁰³ especially as many

⁹⁹ Abundant; referring to Luke 6: 38, 'Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.'

¹⁰⁰ A province intended for a ruler's younger children.

¹⁰¹ Qualities having a greater value.

¹⁰² Both ingredients are needed to make mortar or cement set.

¹⁰³ Badly united.

as were English, who were at a gaze*, looking strange one upon another, not knowing who was faithful to their side but thinking that the King (what with his baits and what with his nets) would draw them all unto him that were any thing worth. And indeed it came to pass that divers came away by the thrid,¹⁰⁴ sometimes one and sometimes another. Barley, that was joint-commissioner with Clifford, did hold out one of the longest, till Perkin was far worn; yet made his peace at length. But the fall of this great man,¹⁰⁵ being in so high authority and favour (as was thought) with the King, and the manner of carriage of the business, as if there had been secret inquisition* upon him for a great time before; and the cause for which he suffered, which was little more than for saying in effect that the title of York was better than the title of Lancaster, which was the case almost of every man (at the least in opinion), was matter of great terror amongst all the King's servants and subjects; insomuch as no man almost thought himself secure, and men durst scarce commune¹⁰⁶ or talk one with another, but there was a general diffidence* everywhere; which nevertheless made the King rather more absolute* than more safe. For bleeding inwards and shut vapours¹⁰⁷ strangle¹⁰⁸ soonest and oppress most.

Hereupon presently came forth swarms and vollies of libels* (which are the gusts* of liberty of speech restrained, and the females¹⁰⁹ of sedition), containing bitter invectives and slanders against the King and some of the council: for the contriving and dispersing whereof (after great diligence of enquiry) five mean persons were caught up and executed.

[Attempts at a Settlement of Ireland, 1494]

Meanwhile the King did not neglect Ireland, being the soil where these mushrooms and upstart weeds that spring up in a night did chiefly prosper. He sent therefore from hence (for the better settling

¹⁰⁴ One by one (like beads on a thread)

¹⁰⁵ Stanley. (Barley was pardoned in July 1498.)

¹⁰⁶ Dared hardly communicate

¹⁰⁷ Constricted exhalations (from bodily organs).

¹⁰⁸ Impede the action of an internal bodily organ by compression.

¹⁰⁹ Mothers (giving birth to sedition).

of his affairs there) commissioners of both robes,¹ the Prior of Llanthony to be his Chancellor in that kingdom, and Sir Edward Poynings with a power of men and a marshal* commission, together with a civil power of his Lieutenant, with a clause* that the Earl of Kildare, then Deputy, should obey him. But the wild Irish, who were the principal offenders, fled into the woods and bogs, after their manner; and those that knew themselves guilty in the pale² fled to them. So that Sir Edward Poynings was enforced to make a wild chase upon the wild Irish, where, in respect* of the mountains and fastnesses*, he did little good; which (either out of a suspicious melancholy upon* his bad success, or the better to save his service from disgrace), he would needs impute* unto the comfort* that the rebels should receive under-hand* from the Earl of Kildare; every light suspicion growing upon³ the Earl, in respect of the Kildare that was in the action of Lambert Simnel, and slain at Stokefield. Wherefore he caused the Earl to be apprehended*, and sent into England; where upon examination he cleared himself so well as he was replaced* in his government. But Poynings, the better to make compensation of the meagreness of his service in the wars by acts of peace, called a parliament;⁴ where was made that memorable act which at this day is called Poynings' Law, whereby all the statutes of England were made to be of force in Ireland. For before they were not; neither are any now in force in Ireland, which were made in England since that time, which was the tenth year of the King.

About this time began to be discovered⁵ in the King that disposition which afterwards, nourished and whet on* by bad counsellors and ministers, proved the blot of his times: which was the course

¹ Representatives of both the church and the law. The Prior of Llanthony was Henry Deane, who became Bishop of Bangor in 1494, Chancellor, deputy, and justiciar in Ireland in 1496. In 1500 he became Bishop of Salisbury, and in 1501 succeeded Morton as Archbishop of Canterbury, only to die in 1503. Sir Edward Poynings (1459–1521), who had joined Henry's attack on Richard III, already a councillor, distinguished soldier, and administrator, was appointed lord deputy of Ireland in September 1494, restoring peace and order within fifteen months.

² That part of Ireland (to the north and west of Dublin) over which English jurisdiction was established.

³ Becoming more and more attached to.

⁴ The parliament met at Drogheda from December 1494 to April 1495, passing forty-nine acts, of which 'Poynings' Law' became the most famous: see Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 261–71.

⁵ Noticed. Henry's avarice was briefly commented on by Polydore Vergil (ed. Hay, pp. 126–30, 132–4 notes, 146–7) and Stowe, but Bacon was the first historian to make it a leading motive in his politics.

he took to crush treasure⁶ out of his subjects' purses by forfeitures upon penal laws.⁷ At this men did startle the more at this time, because it appeared plainly to be in the King's nature, and not out of his necessity, he being now in float for⁸ treasure: for that he had newly received the peace-money from France, the benevolence-money from his subjects, and great casualties* upon the confiscations of the Lord Chamberlain and divers others. The first noted case of this kind was that of Sir William Capel, Alderman of London; who upon sundry penal laws was condemned in the sum of seven and twenty hundred pounds, and compounded* with the King for sixteen hundred; and yet after, Empson⁹ would have cut another chop out of him if the King had not died in the instant.

The summer following,¹⁰ the King, to comfort his mother, whom he did always tenderly love and revere, and to make open demonstration to the world that the proceeding against Sir William Stanley (which was imposed upon him by necessity of state) had not in any degree diminished the affection he bore to Thomas his brother, went in progress* to Latham,¹¹ to make merry with his mother and the Earl, and lay there divers days.

[Perkin Warbeck in Kent, 1495]

During this progress Perkin Warbeck, finding that time and temporizing*, which while his practices were covert and wrought well in England made for him,¹ did now when they were discovered and defeated rather make against him (for that when matters once go down the hill they stay* not without a new force), resolved to try his adventure in some exploit upon England; hoping still upon the affections of the common people towards the house of York. Which body of common people he thought was not to be practised* upon as persons of quality are, but that the only practice upon their affections was to set up a standard* in the field.* The place where he should make his attempt he chose to be the coast of Kent.

⁶ Extract wealth.

⁷ Yielding money or land as penalty for violating a law.

⁸ Overflowing with.

⁹ See below, pp. 174-8.

¹⁰ 1495.

¹¹ In Lancashire.

¹ Was to his advantage.

The King by this time was grown to such a height of reputation for cunning and policy that every accident and event that went well was laid and imputed to his foresight, as if he had set* it before. As in this particular of Perkin's design upon Kent. For the world would not believe afterwards but the King, having secret intelligence of Perkin's intention for Kent, the better to draw it on, went of purpose into the north afar off; laying an open side unto Perkin to make him come to the close,² and so to trip up his heels,³ having made sure in Kent beforehand.

But so it was that Perkin had gathered together a power of all nations*, neither in number nor in the hardiness and courage of the persons contemptible*; but in their nature and fortunes to be feared as well of friends as enemies; being bankrupts, and many of them felons*, and such as lived by rapine.* These he put to sea, and arrived upon the coast of Sandwich and Deal in Kent about July.

There he cast anchor, and to prove* the affections of the people sent some of his men to land, making great boasts of the power that was to follow. The Kentish men, perceiving that Perkin was not followed by any English of name or account, and that his forces consisted but of strangers born, and most of them base people and free-booters*, fitter to spoil* a coast than to recover a kingdom, resorting unto the principal gentlemen of the country*, professed their loyalty to the King and desired to be directed and commanded for the best of the King's service. The gentlemen, entering into consultation, directed some forces in good number to shew themselves upon the coast, and some of them to make signs to entice Perkin's soldiers to land, as if they would join with them; and some others to appear from some other places, and to make semblance as if they fled from them, the better to encourage them to land. But Perkin, who by playing the Prince, or else taught by secretary Fryon, had learned thus much, that people under command do use* to consult and after to march on in order, and rebels contrariwise run upon an head⁴ together in confusion; considering the delay of time, and observing their orderly and not tumultuary arming, doubted* the worst. And therefore the wily youth would not set one foot out of his ship till he might see things were sure.

² Grapple with an opponent (in wrestling).

³ Throw him.

⁴ Act confusedly.

Wherefore the King's forces, perceiving that they could draw on no more than those that were formerly landed, set upon them and cut them in pieces ere they could fly back to their ships. In which skirmish (besides those that fled and were slain) there were taken about an hundred and fifty persons, which, for that the King thought that to punish a few for example was gentleman's pay,⁵ but for rascal* people they were to be cut off every man, especially in the beginning of an enterprise; and likewise for that he saw that Perkin's forces would now consist chiefly of such rabble and scum of desperate people, he therefore hanged them all for the greater terror. They were brought to London all railed* in ropes, like a team of horses in a cart, and were executed some of them at London and Wapping, and the rest at divers places upon the sea-coast of Kent, Sussex, and Norfolk; for sea-marks* or light-houses to teach Perkin's people to avoid the coast. The King being advertised of the landing of the rebels, thought to leave his progress. But being certified the next day that they were partly defeated and partly fled, he continued his progress, and sent Sir Richard Guildford into Kent in message; who calling the country together, did much commend (from the King) their fidelity, manhood, and well handling of that service, and gave them all thanks, and in private promised reward to some particulars.*

Upon the sixteenth of November (this being the eleventh year of the King) was holden the Serjeants' feast⁶ at Ely Place, there being nine serjeants of that call.⁷ The King, to honour the feast, was present with his Queen at the dinner; being a Prince that was ever ready to grace and countenance* the professors of the law; having a little of that, that as he governed his subjects by his laws, so he governed his laws by his lawyers.

⁵ Treatment appropriate for decent people.

⁶ To celebrate nomination as a high-ranking barrister; from which group the common-law judges were chosen (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 158-9).

⁷ Created at that time.

[Henry's League with Italian States against France,
1495]

This year also the King entered into league with the Italian potentates for the defence of Italy against France. For King Charles had conquered the realm of Naples,¹ and lost it again, in a kind of felicity of a dream.² He passed the whole length of Italy without resistance; so that it was true which Pope Alexander³ was wont to say, that the Frenchmen came into Italy with chalk in their hands to mark up their lodgings rather than with swords to fight. He likewise entered and won in effect the whole kingdom of Naples itself without striking stroke. But presently thereupon he did commit and multiply so many errors as was too great a task for the best fortune to overcome. He gave no contentment to the barons of Naples, of the faction of the Angevins, but scattered his rewards according to the mercenary appetites of some about him. He put all Italy upon their guard, by the seizing and holding of Ostia, and the protecting of the liberty of Pisa, which made all men suspect that his purposes looked further than his title of Naples. He fell too soon at difference with Ludovico Sforza, who was the man that carried the keys which brought him in and shut him out. He neglected to extinguish some relics* of the war. And lastly, in regard of his easy passage through Italy without resistance, he entered into an overmuch despising of the arms of the Italians, whereby he left the realm of Naples at his departure so much the less provided. So that not long after his return the whole kingdom revolted to Ferdinando the younger, and the French were quite driven out. Nevertheless Charles did make both great threats and great preparations to re-enter Italy once again, wherefore at the instance of divers of the states of Italy (and

¹ Charles VIII, having been supported in his claim to the throne of Naples by Ludovico Sforza (who had usurped the government of Milan from his nephew), entered the city on 22 February 1495. But his indulgence in feasting, his distribution of offices and rewards to the French rather than to the native aristocracy, soon alienated his Italian supporters, who united against him, forcing him to flee Italy in July of that year.

² Short-lived and illusory happiness.

³ Rodrigo Borgia, Pope Alexander VI (1431-1503), referring to the French expedition under Charles VIII in 1494-5. Bacon quoted this apophthegm several times: see *S*, I.162, 578, III.363, IV.371. His source was the *Mémoires* of Philip de Commines, ed. J. Calmette and G. Durville (Paris, 1924-5), III.81.

especially of Pope Alexander) there was a league concluded between the said Pope, Maximilian King of the Romans, Henry King of England, Ferdinando and Isabella King and Queen of Spain (for so they are constantly placed in the original treaty throughout), Augustino Barbadico Duke of Venice, and Ludovico Sforza Duke of Milan, for the common defence of their estates: wherein though Ferdinando of Naples was not named as principal, yet no doubt the kingdom of Naples was tacitly included as a fee of the church.⁴

There died also this year Cecile Duchess of York, mother to King Edward the Fourth, at her castle of Barkhamsted, being of extreme years, and who had lived to see three princes of her body crowned,⁵ and four murdered.⁶ She was buried at Fotheringham, by⁷ her husband.

[Parliament and Law-giving, 1495]

This year also the King called his parliament,¹ where many laws were made of a more private and vulgar* nature than ought to detain the reader of an history. And it may be justly suspected by the proceedings following, that as the King did excel in good commonwealth laws, so nevertheless he had in secret a design to make use of them as well for collecting of treasure as for correcting of manners; and so meaning thereby to harrow* his people did accumulate them the rather.²

The principal law that was made this parliament was a law³ of a strange nature, rather just than legal, and more magnanimous than provident. This law did ordain that no person that did assist (in arms or otherwise) the King for the time being, should after be

⁴ The papacy claimed that the King of Naples was under its sovereignty. In July 1496, Henry joined the Holy League, set up the previous March, designed to restrain Charles VIII's aggrandizements.

⁵ Edward IV, Edward V (who was never crowned), Richard III.

⁶ Edmund Earl of Rutland; George Earl of Clarence; and the two princes Edward V and Richard Duke of York, murdered in the Tower.

⁷ By the side of.

¹ On 14 October 1495.

² Pile up laws more and more.

³ This law exempted from the penalties of treason those who would henceforth serve a *de facto* king: as Bacon saw, this measure privileged those who fought on the winning side, right or wrong, and rather followed natural equity than constituting a legal rule.

impeached therefore*, or attainted* either by the course of law or by act of parliament; but if any such act of attainder did hap* to be made, it should be void and of none effect; for that it was agreeable* to reason of estate⁴ that the subject should not inquire of the justness of the King's title* or quarrel, and it was agreeable to good conscience that (whatsoever the fortune of the war were) the subject should not suffer for his obedience. The spirit of this law was wonderful pious and noble, being like, in matter of war, unto the spirit of David⁵ in matter of plague, who said, 'If I have sinned strike me, but what have these sheep done?' Neither wanted this law parts of prudent and deep foresight. For it did the better take away occasion for the people to busy themselves to pry into the King's title, for that (howsoever it fell) their safety was already provided for. Besides, it could not but greatly draw unto him the love and hearts of the people, because he seemed more careful* for them than for himself. But yet nevertheless it did take off from his party that great tie and spur of necessity to fight and go victors out of the field, considering their lives and fortunes were put in safety and protected, whether they stood to it or ran away.

But the force and obligation of this law was in itself illusory, as to the latter part of it, by a precedent act of parliament to bind or frustrate a future. For a supreme and absolute power cannot conclude itself,⁶ neither can that which is in nature revocable be made fixed; no more than if a man should appoint or declare by his will that if he made any later will it should be void. And for the case of the act of parliament, there is a notable precedent of it in King Henry the Eighth's time; who doubting he might die in the minority* of his son, procured an act to pass that no statute made during the minority of a King should bind him or his successors, except it were confirmed by the King under his great seal at his full age. But the first act that passed in King Edward the Sixth's time was an act of repeal of that former act; at which time nevertheless the King was minor. But things that do not bind may satisfy for the time.⁷

* The national interest, set above the law.

⁴ 2 Sam. 24: 17.

⁶ Bind its future action by any previous order.

⁷ For the time being. 'The purpose of this act was to reassure Yorkists (or other rebels) who had so far escaped attainder or forfeiture that no proceedings would be taken on the grounds of what they had done before Henry VII became King

There was also made a shoaring* or underpropping act for the Benevolence:⁸ to make the sums which any person had agreed to pay, and nevertheless were not brought in, to be leviable by course of law. Which act did not only bring in the arrears, but did indeed countenance* the whole business, and was pretended to be made at the desire of those that had been forward* to pay.

This parliament also was made that good law which gave the attain upon a false verdict between party and party,⁹ which before was a kind of evangile,¹⁰ irremediable.¹¹ It extends not to causes capital, as well because they are for the most part at the King's suit,¹² as because in them, if they be followed in course of indictment, there passeth a double jury, the indictors and the triers,¹³ and so not twelve men but four and twenty. But it seemeth that was not the only reason, for this reason holdeth not in the appeal. But the great reason was, lest it should tend to the discouragement of jurors in cases of life and death if they should be subject to suit and penalty, where the favour of life maketh against them.¹⁴ It extendeth not also to any suit where the demand is under the value of forty pounds; for that in such cases of petty value it would not quit the charge to go about again.¹⁵

There was another law made against a branch of ingratitude in women, who having been advanced¹⁶ by their husbands or their husbands' ancestors, should alien¹⁷ and thereby seek to defeat the

... It was a measure of temporary expediency', perfectly summed up in Bacon's phrase (Crimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 178-9).

⁸ Giving statutory approval to the supposedly voluntary raising of a 'benevolence' (which had been declared illegal in a statute of Richard III's reign): see above, pp. 85-6.

⁹ A law to punish a jury that had given a false verdict in civil action between opposed parties.

¹⁰ 'Something confidently asserted or taken to be true' (*SOED*).

¹¹ A jury's verdict was no longer regarded as final and irrevocable; false ones could be annulled.

¹² Indictments in capital offences were delivered by the crown.

¹³ The charges against an indicted person were first considered by a Grand Jury of twelve men (the 'indictors'); only if this found a *prima facie* case was it sent for trial by another jury (the 'triers'). This argument, Bacon adds, would not hold in appeals.

¹⁴ In capital cases the jury should not be subject to the risk of pains and penalties, lest the jurors be afraid to pass a verdict of not guilty ('in favour of life').

¹⁵ Where the cost of a new trial would be greater than the sum demanded.

¹⁶ Advanced in status by the grant of lands.

¹⁷ Alienate the property of their deceased husbands.

heirs or those in remainder¹⁸ of the lands whereunto they had been so advanced. The remedy was by giving power to the next¹⁹ to enter for a forfeiture.²⁰

There was also enacted that charitable law for the admission of poor suitors *in forma pauperis*, without fee to counsellor, attorney, or clerk; whereby poor men became rather able to vex than unable to sue.²¹ There were divers other good laws made that parliament, as we said before; but we still observe our manner in selecting out those that are not of a vulgar nature.

[Perkin Warbeck in Scotland, 1495]

The King this while, though he sat in parliament as in full peace, and seemed to account of* the designs of Perkin (who was now returned into Flanders) but as of a May-game;¹ yet having the composition of a wise King, stout without² and apprehensive within, had given order for the watching of beacons³ upon the coast, and erecting more where they stood too thin; and had a careful eye where this wandering cloud would break. But Perkin, advised to keep his fire (which hitherto burned as it were upon green wood) alive with continual blowing, sailed again into Ireland; whence he had formerly departed, rather upon the hopes of France than upon any unreadiness or discouragement he found in that people. But in the space of time between, the King's diligence and Poyning's commission had so settled things there as there was nothing left for Perkin but the blustering* affection of the wild and naked people. Wherefore he was advised by his council to seek aid of the King of Scotland,⁴ a Prince young and valorous, and in good terms with his nobles and people, and ill affected to King Henry. At this time also both Maximilian and Charles of France began to bear no good will

¹⁸ Residuary legatees, having a right to succeed to a position.

¹⁹ Next in line of inheritance.

²⁰ Depriving them of all rights to the estate.

²¹ The legislation was designed to give the poor the right to sue, even if this vexed the rich.

¹ Merry-makings on 1st of May; anything 'trivial'.

² Outwardly fearless.

³ Look-out posts (also signal fires) to guard against an invasion by sea.

⁴ James IV, who reigned from 1488 to 1513, received Warbeck at Stirling on 27 November 1495 and befriended him until July 1497.

to the King: the one being displeased with the King's prohibition of commerce with Flanders, the other holding the King for suspect in regard of his late entry into league with the Italians. Wherefore besides the open aids of the Duchess of Burgundy, which did with sails and oars put on and advance Perkin's designs, there wanted not some secret tides from Maximilian and Charles which did further his fortunes, insomuch as they both by their secret letters and messages recommended him to the King of Scotland.

Perkin therefore coming into Scotland upon those hopes with a well-appointed* company, was by the King of Scots (being formerly well prepared) honourably welcomed; and soon after his arrival admitted to his presence in a solemn manner. For the King received him in state in his chamber of presence, accompanied with divers of his nobles. And Perkin, well attended as well with those that the King had sent before him as with his own train, entered the room where the King was, and coming near to the King, and bowing a little to embrace him, he retired some paces back, and with a loud voice, that all that were present might hear him, made his declaration⁵ in this manner:

'High and mighty King; your Grace and these your nobles here present may be pleased benignly* to bow your ears to hear the tragedy of a young man that by right ought to hold in his hand the ball of a kingdom, but by fortune is made himself a ball,⁶ tossed from misery to misery and from place to place. You see here before you the spectacle of a Plantagenet, who hath been carried from the nursery to the sanctuary, from the sanctuary to the direful prison, from the prison to the hand of the cruel tormentor, and from that hand to the wide wilderness (as I may truly call it), for so the world hath been to me. So that he that is born to a great kingdom hath not ground to set his foot upon, more than this where he now standeth by your princely favour.

⁵ Bacon's source for Warbeck's oration is Speed, who narrates it in reported speech, in the third person. That Bacon should provide a major speech for Perkin, 'an imaginative effort ordinarily reserved . . . for figures of such stature as Cardinal Morton, King Henry', or a French ambassador, shows the extent to which he makes Perkin a 'focal character' (Judith H. Anderson, *Biographical Truth. The Representation of Historical Persons in Tudor-Stuart Writing* (New Haven and London, 1984), p. 181).

⁶ The orb (symbol of rule), contrasted with a tennis ball.

'Edward the Fourth, late King of England (as your Grace cannot but have heard), left two sons, Edward and Richard Duke of York, both very young. Edward the eldest succeeded their father in the crown, by the name of King Edward the Fifth. But Richard Duke of Gloucester, their unnatural uncle, first thirsting after the kingdom through ambition, and afterwards thirsting for their blood out of desire to secure himself, employed an instrument of his (confident* to him as he thought) to murder them both. But this man that was employed to execute that execrable tragedy, having cruelly slain King Edward, the eldest of the two, was moved partly by remorse and partly by some other mean to save Richard his brother; making a report nevertheless to the tyrant that he had performed his commandment for both brethren.

'This report was accordingly believed,⁷ and published generally. So that the world hath been possessed of an opinion that they both were barbarously made away, though ever truth hath some sparks that fly abroad until it appear in due time, as this hath had. But Almighty God, that stopped the mouth of the lions,⁸ and saved little Joas from the tyranny of Athaliah when she massacred the King's children,⁹ and did save Isaac when the hand was stretched forth to sacrifice him,¹⁰ preserved the second brother. For I myself that stand here in your presence am that very Richard Duke of York, brother of that unfortunate Prince King Edward the Fifth, now the most rightful surviving heir-male to that victorious and most noble Edward, of that name the Fourth, late King of England.

'For the manner of my escape, it is fit it should pass in silence, or at least in a more secret relation*, for that it may concern some alive, and the memory of some that are dead. Let it suffice to think that I had then a mother living, a Queen, and one that expected daily such a commandment from the tyrant for the murdering of her children. Thus in my tender age escaping by God's mercy out of London, I was secretly conveyed over sea; where after a time the party that had me in charge (upon what new fears, change of mind, or practice*, God knoweth) suddenly forsook me, whereby I was forced to wander abroad, and to seek mean conditions* for the sustaining of my life. Wherefore distracted* between several passions, the one of fear to be

⁷ That is, by Richard.

⁸ Dan. 6. 22.

⁹ Gen. 22: 12.

¹⁰ 2 Kings 11: 2.

known, lest the tyrant should have a new attempt upon me, the other of grief and disdain to be unknown and to live in that base and servile manner that I did, I resolved with myself to expect* the tyrant's death, and then to put myself into my sister's hands, who was next heir to the crown. But in this season it happened one Henry Tudor,¹¹ son to Edmund Tudor Earl of Richmond, to come from France and enter into the realm, and by subtile* and foul means to obtain the crown of the same, which to me rightfully appertained*: so that it was but a change from tyrant to tyrant.

'This Henry, my extreme and mortal enemy, so soon as he had knowledge of my being alive, imagined* and wrought all the subtile ways and means he could to procure my final destruction. For my mortal enemy hath not only falsely surmised* me to be a feigned person, giving me nick-names, so abusing* the world; but also, to defer* and put* me from entry into England, hath offered large sums of money to corrupt the Princes and their ministers with whom I have been retained, and made importune labours¹² to certain servants about my person to murder or poison me, and others to forsake and leave my righteous quarrel and to depart from my service, as Sir Robert Clifford and others. So that every man of reason may well perceive that Henry, calling himself King of England, needed not to have bestowed such great sums of treasure, nor so to have busied himself with importune and incessant labour and industry to compass* my death and ruin, if I had been such a feigned person. But the truth of my cause being so manifest moved the most Christian King Charles, and the Lady Duchess Dowager of Burgundy, my most dear aunt, not only to acknowledge the truth thereof but lovingly to assist me.

'But it seemeth that God above, for the good of this whole island and the knitting of these two kingdoms of England and Scotland in a strait concord and amity by so great an obligation, hath reserved the placing of me in the imperial throne of England for the arms and succours of your Grace. Neither is it the first time that a King of Scotland hath supported them that were reft* and spoiled* of the kingdom of England, as of late in fresh memory it was done in the person of Henry the Sixth.¹³ Wherefore, for that your Grace hath given clear signs that you are in no noble quality inferior to

¹¹ The MS spelling is Tidder, perhaps intended contemptuously.

¹² Tried hard to persuade.

¹³ Temporarily ejected from the throne by the Yorkists, he took refuge in Edinburgh from 1461 to 1464, being helped by James III of Scotland.

your royal ancestors, I, so distressed a Prince, was hereby moved to come and put myself into your royal hands; desiring your assistance to recover my kingdom of England, promising faithfully to bear myself towards your Grace no otherwise than if I were your own natural brother; and will, upon the recovery of mine inheritance, gratefully do to you all the pleasure that is in my utmost power.'

After Perkin had told his tale, King James answered bravely and wisely that, whosoever he were he should not repent him of putting himself into his hands. And from that time forth, though there wanted not some about him that would have persuaded him that all was but an illusion, yet notwithstanding, either taken by Perkin's amiable and alluring behaviour, or inclining to the recommendation of the great Princes abroad, or willing to take an occasion of a war against King Henry, he entertained him in all things as became the person of Richard Duke of York, embraced* his quarrel, and, the more to put it out of doubt that he took him to be a great Prince and not a representation only, he gave consent that this Duke should take to wife the Lady Katherine Gordon daughter to the Earl of Huntley, being a near kinswoman to the King himself, and a young virgin of excellent beauty and virtue.

[Perkin's Proclamation, November 1495]

Not long after, the King of Scots in person, with Perkin in his company, entered with a great army (though it consisted chiefly of borderers being raised somewhat suddenly) into Northumberland. And Perkin, for a perfume* before him as he went, caused to be published a proclamation¹ of this tenor* following, in the name of Richard Duke of York, true inheritor of the crown of England:

¹ In a marginal note Bacon acknowledged his source: 'The original of this proclamation remaineth with Sir Robert Cotton . . . from whose manuscripts I have had much light for the furnishing of this work.' However, Spedding's detailed comparison of Bacon's text (*S*, vi.167-71) with Perkin's original proclamation (in September 1496), a copy of which (BL, Harleian MSS 283 fol. 123b) he includes as an appendix (252-5), shows that Bacon has given 'not a transcript, but a *representation*; the sort of representation which a clear-headed reporter will give of a confused message', perhaps from memory, with occasional quotations from Speed's text.

'It hath pleased God, who putteth down the mighty from their seat, and exalteth the humble,² and suffereth not the hopes of the just to perish in the end, to give us means at the length³ to show ourselves armed unto our lieges and people of England. But far be it from us to intend their hurt or damage, or to make war upon them, otherwise than to deliver ourself and them from tyranny and oppression. For our mortal enemy Henry Tudor, a false usurper of the crown of England which to us by natural and lineal right appertaineth, knowing in his own heart our undoubted right (we being the very Richard Duke of York, younger son and now surviving heir-male of the noble and victorious Edward the Fourth, late King of England), hath not only deprived us of our kingdom but likewise by all foul and wicked means sought to betray us and bereave* us of our life. Yet if his tyranny only extended itself to our person (although our royal blood teacheth us to be sensible* of injuries), it should be less to our grief. But this Tudor, who boasteth himself to have overthrown a tyrant, hath ever since his first entrance into his usurped reign put little in practice but tyranny and the feats* thereof.

'For King Richard, our unnatural uncle, although desire of rule did blind him yet in his other actions, like a true Plantagenet, was noble, and loved the honour of the realm and the contentment and comfort of his nobles and people. But this our mortal enemy, agreeable* to the meanness of his birth, hath trodden under foot the honour of this nation, selling our best confederates for money and making merchandise of the blood, estates, and fortunes of our peers and subjects by feigned wars and dishonourable peace, only to enrich his coffers.⁴ Nor unlike hath been his hateful misgovernment and evil deportments* here at home. First he hath, to fortify his false quarrel, caused divers nobles of this our realm (whom he held suspect and stood in dread of) to be cruelly murdered; as our cousin Sir William Stanley Lord Chamberlain, Sir Simon Mountfort, Sir Robert Ratcliffe, William Daubeney, Humphrey Stafford, and many others, besides such as have dearly bought their lives with

² Quotation from the 'Magnificat', Luke 1: 52.

³ Finally.

⁴ This again is Bacon's interpretation.

intolerable ransoms: some of which nobles are now in the sanctuary. Also he hath long kept, and yet keepeth in prison our right entirely well-beloved cousin, Edward, son and heir to our uncle Duke of Clarence, and others; withholding from them their rightful inheritance, to the intent they should never be of might and power to aid and assist us at our need, after the duty of their legiances.* He also married by compulsion certain of our sisters, and also the sister of our said cousin the Earl of Warwick, and divers other ladies of the royal blood, unto certain of his kinsmen and friends of simple and low degree; and, putting apart all well disposed nobles, he hath none in favour and trust about his person, but Bishop Fox, Smith, Bray, Lovel, Oliver King, David Owen, Riseley, Turberville, Tyler, Cholmeley, Empson,⁵ James Hobarte, John Cutte, Garth, Henry Wyate, and such other caittiffs* and villains of birth,⁶ which by subtile inventions* and pilling* of the people have been the principal finders*, occasioners, and counsellors of the misrule and mischief now reigning in England.

'We remembering these premises, with the great and execrable offences daily committed and done by our foresaid great enemy and his adherents in breaking the liberties and franchises* of our mother the holy church,⁷ upon pretences of wicked and heathenish policy, to the high displeasure of Almighty God; besides the manifold treasons, abominable murders, manslaughters, robberies, extortions*, the daily pilling of the people by dismes*, taskes*, tallages*, benevolences, and other unlawful impositions and grievous exactions*, with many other heinous* effects,⁸ to the likely* destruction and desolation of the whole realm, shall by God's grace, and the help and assistance of the great lords of our blood, with the counsel of other sad* persons, see that the commodities of our realm be employed to the most advantage of the same; the intercourse of merchandise betwixt realm and realm to be ministered and handled as shall more be to the common weal and prosperity of our subjects, and all such dismes, taskes, tallages, benevolences, unlawful impositions, and grievous exactions as be above rehearsed, to be fore-done* and laid apart, and never from henceforth to be called upon

⁵ His name is in the proclamation, but was overlooked by Speed.

⁶ The proclamation has 'of simple birth': Bacon here follows Speed.

⁷ See above p. 59 for Henry's limiting the 'benefit of clergy'.

⁸ The proclamation reads 'offences', probably correctly.

but in such cases as our noble progenitors Kings of England have of old time been accustomed to have the aid, succour, and help of their subjects and true liege-men.⁹

‘And farther we do out of our grace and clemency hereby as well publish and promise to all our subjects remission and free pardon of all by-past offences whatsoever against our person or estate in adhering to our said enemy, by whom we know well they have been misled, if they shall within time convenient submit themselves unto us. And for such as shall come with the foremost to assist our righteous quarrel, we shall make them so far partakers of our princely favour and bounty as shall be highly for the comfort of them and theirs both during their life and after their death. As also we shall, by all means which God shall put into our hands, demean* ourselves to give royal contentment to all degrees and estates of our people; maintaining the liberties of holy church in their entire*, preserving the honours, privileges, and pre-eminences of our nobles from contempt or disparagement*, according to the dignity of their blood. We shall also unyoke our people from all heavy burdens and endurances, and confirm our cities, boroughs, and towns in their charters and freedoms, with enlargement where it shall be deserved; and in all points give our subjects cause to think that the blessed and debonaire* government of our noble father King Edward in his last times is in us revived.

‘And forasmuch as the putting to death or taking alive of our said mortal enemy may be a mean to stay* much effusion of blood, which otherwise may ensue if by compulsion or fair promises he shall draw after him any number of our subjects to resist us, which we desire to avoid (though we be certainly informed that our said enemy is purposed and prepared to fly the land, having already made over great masses of the treasure of our crown the better to support him in foreign parts); we do hereby declare that whosoever shall take or distress* our said enemy, though the party be of never* so mean a condition, he shall be by us rewarded with £1,000 in money, forthwith* to be laid down to him, and an hundred marks by the year of inheritance;¹⁰ besides that he may otherwise merit,

⁹ Vassals sworn to the service of their lord. (This is the end of Speed’s extract: Bacon now depends wholly on his memory of the original.)

¹⁰ For him and his inheritors.

both toward God and all good people, for the destruction of such a tyrant.

'Lastly, we do all men to wit'¹¹ (and herein we take also God to witness) that whereas God hath moved the heart of our dearest cousin the King of Scotland to aid us in person in this our righteous quarrel, that it is altogether without any pact or promise, or so much as demand of any thing that may prejudice our crown or subjects; but contrariwise with promise on our said cousin's part that, whensoever he shall find us in sufficient strength to get the upper hand of our enemy (which we hope will be very suddenly*), he will forthwith peaceably return into his own kingdom, contenting himself only with the glory of so honourable an enterprise, and our true and faithful love and amity: which we shall ever by the grace of Almighty God so order as shall be to the great comfort of both kingdoms.'

But Perkin's proclamation did little edify* with the people of England. Neither was he the better welcome for the company¹² he came in. Wherefore the King of Scotland, seeing none came in to Perkin nor none stirred anywhere in his favour, turned his enterprise into a rode*, and wasted and destroyed the country of Northumberland with fire and sword. But hearing that there were forces coming against him, and not willing that they should find his men heavy and laden with booty, he returned into Scotland with great spoils, deferring further prosecution till another time. It is said that Perkin, acting the part of a prince handsomely when he saw the Scottish fell to waste the country, came to the King in a passionate manner, making great lamentation, and desired that that might not be the manner* of making the war, for that no crown was so dear to his mind as that he desired to purchase it with the blood and ruin of his country. Whereunto the King answered half in sport*, that he doubted much he was careful for that that was none of his, and that he should be too good a steward for his enemy to save the country to his use.

¹¹ Proclaim to all.

¹² The borderers were notorious for feuds and robberies.

[The Anglo-Flemish Treaty, February 1496]

By this time, being the eleventh year of the King, the interruption of trade between the English and the Flemish began to pinch the merchants of both nations very sore, which moved them by all means they could devise to affect and dispose their sovereigns respectively to open the intercourse again. Wherein time favoured them. For the Archduke¹ and his council began to see that Perkin would prove but a runagate* and citizen of the world;² and that it was the part of children to fall out about babies.³ And the King on his part, after the attempts* upon Kent and Northumberland, began to have the business of Perkin in less estimation, so as he did not put it to account⁴ in any consultation of state. But that that moved him most was that, being a King that loved wealth and treasure he could not endure to have trade sick, nor any obstruction to continue in the gate-vein⁵ which disperseth that blood. And yet he kept state⁶ so far, as first to be sought* unto. Wherein the Merchant Adventurers likewise, being a strong company at that time and well under-set* with rich men and good* order, did hold out bravely; taking* off the commodities of the kingdom, though they lay dead* upon their hands for want of vent.⁷ At the last commissioners met at London to treat.* On the King's part, Bishop Fox Lord Privy Seal, Viscount Wells, Kendall Prior of Saint John's, and Warham Master of the Rolls (who began to gain much upon the King's opinion), and Urswick, who was almost ever* one, and Riseley. On the Archduke's part, the Lord Bevers his Admiral, the Lord Verunsell President of Flanders, and others. These concluded a perfect treaty both of amity and intercourse between the King and the Archduke, containing articles both of state, commerce, and free fishing.

This is that treaty which the Flemings call at this day *intercursus magnus*,⁸ both because it is more complete than the precedent

¹ Philip.

² A person who is at home anywhere; here, meant ironically.

³ Quarrel over toys.

⁴ Take notice of.

⁵ Main artery (so, channel of trade).

⁶ Preserved his dignity.

⁷ Lack of outlet.

⁸ This term was 'conveniently immortalized' by Bacon, who claimed to be following Flemish usage (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 233-4). *Intercursus* means 'commerce' or

treaties of the third and fourth year of the King, and chiefly to give it a difference from the treaty that followed in the one and twentieth year of the King, which they call *intercursus malus*.⁹ In this treaty there was an express article against the reception of the rebels of either prince by other, purporting* that if any such rebel should be required by the prince whose rebel he was of¹⁰ the prince confederate, that forthwith the prince confederate should by proclamation command him to avoid his country; which if he did not within fifteen days the rebel was to stand proscribed and put out of protection. But nevertheless in this article Perkin was not named, neither perhaps contained*, because he was no rebel. But by this means his wings were clipt of his followers that were English. And it was expressly comprised in the treaty that it should extend to the territories of the Duchess Dowager. After the intercourse thus restored, the English merchants came again to their mansion at Antwerp, where they were received with procession and great joy.

The winter following, being the twelfth¹¹ year of his reign, the King called again his parliament, where he did much exaggerate both the malice and the cruel predatory war lately made by the King of Scotland: that that King, being in amity with him, and no ways provoked, should so burn in hatred towards him as to drink of the lees and dregs of Perkin's intoxication, who was every where else detected* and discarded*; and that when he perceived it was out of his reach to do the King any hurt he had turned his arms upon unarmed and unprovided people, to spoil only and depopulate, contrary to the laws both of war and peace; concluding that he could neither with honour, nor with the safety of his people to whom he did owe protection, let pass these wrongs unrevenged.

'exchange' ('mercantile dealings' being the primary sense of 'intercourse'), this treaty allowing English traders to sell freely in any part of Archduke Philip's dominion, except Flanders, without an increase in customs duties, and guaranteeing their legal rights. It formed the basis of Anglo-Flemish trade for years to come. The earlier treaties to which Bacon refers were those proclaimed on 4 April and 17 November 1489.

⁹ Whereas the trade agreement of 24 February 1496 could well be called *magnus*, being based on principles benefiting both sides, the treaty of 1506 was extorted by Henry out of Philip's then weak position, and was called *malus* (bad) because it privileged the English and disadvantaged the Netherlands merchants. See Bacon's further reference, p. 190.

¹⁰ From; Bacon refers to the 1496 treaty.

¹¹ 1497. This, the sixth parliament, met from 16 January to 13 March.

The parliament understood him well, and gave him a subsidy limited to the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, besides two fifteens:¹² for his wars were always to him as a mine of treasure of a strange kind of ore, iron at the top, and gold and silver at the bottom.¹³

At this parliament, for that there had been so much time spent in making laws the year before, and for that it was called purposely in respect of the Scottish war, there were no laws made to be remembered. Only there passed a law at the suit of the Merchant Adventurers of England against the Merchant Adventurers of London, for monopolizing and exacting upon the trade;¹⁴ which it seemeth they did a little to save themselves after the hard time they had sustained by want of trade. But those innovations* were taken away by parliament.

[The Cornish Rebellion, 1497]

But it was fatal to the King¹ to fight for his money. And though he avoided to fight with enemies abroad, yet he was still enforced to fight for it with rebels at home. For no sooner began the subsidy to be levied² in Cornwall but the people there grew to grudge* and murmur*; the Cornish being a race of men stout of stomach*, mighty of body and limb, and that lived hardly* in a barren country, and many of them could for a need* live under-ground, that were tinnerns.* They muttered extremely that it was a thing not to be suffered that for a little stir of the Scots, soon blown over, they should be thus grinded to powder with payments, and said it was for them to pay that had too much, and lived idly, but they would

¹² A grant of a fifteenth and tenth was the grant of a specified sum of money (usually about £30,000) fixed in 1334, little altered since, levied first on the communities and then on individuals, according to their wealth. Henry tried to supplement these fixed sums by direct taxes which would reflect the growth in local wealth (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 196-7). Speed says that Henry exploited anti-Scottish feeling in order to enrich himself.

¹³ The iron of the arms needed for war was the uppermost layer, but it ended up with gold and silver in the King's coffers.

¹⁴ Imposing exorbitant import duties on all merchandise (to make up for their earlier losses).

¹ The King was fated to.

² In February 1497.

eat their bread that they got with the sweat of their brows,³ and no man should take it from them.

And as in the tides of people once up* there want not commonly stirring winds to make them more rough, so this people did light upon two ringleaders or captains of the rout.* The one was Michael Joseph, a blacksmith or farrier* of Bodmin, a notable talking fellow, and no less desirous to be talked of. The other was Thomas Flammock, a lawyer, that by telling his neighbours commonly upon any occasion that the law was on their side had gotten great sway amongst them. This man talked learnedly, and as if he could tell how to make a rebellion and never break the peace. He told the people that subsidies were not to be granted nor levied in this case, that is for wars of Scotland, for that the law had provided another course, by service of escuage,⁴ for those journeys; much less when all was quiet, and war was made but a pretence to poll* and pill* the people. And therefore that it was good they should not stand like a sheep before the shearers but put on harness* and take weapons in their hands; yet to do no creature hurt, but go and deliver the King a strong petition for the laying* down of those grievous payments and for the punishment of those that had given him that counsel, to make others beware how they did the like in time to come. And said for his part he did not see how they could do the duty of true Englishmen and good liege-men except they did deliver the King from such wicked ones that would destroy both him and the country. Their aim was at Archbishop Morton and Sir Reginald Bray, who were the King's screens in this envy.*

After that these two, Flammock and the blacksmith, had by joint and several pratings⁵ found tokens of consent in the multitude, they offered themselves to lead them until they should hear of better men to be their leaders, which they said would be ere long; telling them further that they would be but their servants, and first in every danger, but doubted not but to make both the west-end and the east-end of England to meet in so good a quarrel, and that all (rightly understood) was but for the King's service.

³ Cf. Gen. 3: 19, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread', the duty of work imposed on mankind after the Fall.

⁴ A tax or feudal duty, paid in lieu of military service in the King's wars (originally for forty days a year).

⁵ Speaking to the people jointly and separately.

The people upon these seditious instigations did arm, most of them with bows and arrows, and bills,⁶ and such other weapons of rude and country people; and forthwith under the command of their leaders (which in such cases is ever at pleasure⁷) marched out of Cornwall through Devonshire unto Taunton in Somersetshire, without any slaughter, violence, or spoil of the country. At Taunton they killed in fury an officious and eager commissioner for the subsidy, whom they called the Provost of Perin. Thence they marched to Wells, where the Lord Audley (with whom their leaders had before some secret intelligence), a nobleman of an ancient family, but unquiet and popular⁸ and aspiring to ruin,⁹ came in to them, and was by them with great gladness and cries of joy accepted as their general, they being now proud that they were led by a nobleman.

The Lord Audley led them on from Wells to Salisbury, and from Salisbury to Winchester. Thence the foolish people, who in effect led their leaders, had a mind to be led into Kent, fancying that the people there would join with them; contrary to all reason or judgement, considering the Kentish men had shewed great loyalty and affection to the King so lately before. But the rude* people had heard Flammock say that Kent was never conquered, and that they were the freest people of England. And upon these vain noises* they looked for great matters at their hands, in a cause which they conceited* to be for the liberty of the subject. But when they were comen into Kent the country was so well settled, both by the King's late kind usage towards them and by the credit and power of the Earl of Kent, the Lord Abergavenny, and the Lord Cobham, as neither gentleman nor yeoman came in to their aid; which did much damp* and dismay many of the simpler sort. Insomuch as divers of them did secretly fly from the army and went home; but the sturdier sort, and those that were most engaged, stood by it, and rather waxed proud* than failed in hopes and courage. For as it did somewhat appall* them that the people came not in to them, so it did no less encourage them that the King's forces had not set upon them, having marched from the west to the east of England.

* Crude weapons (used for chopping wood, or pruning trees).

⁷ Always ready to go where the mob wishes.

⁸ Seeking popular favour.

⁹ Ambitious to destroy things.

Wherefore they kept on their way and encamped upon Blackheath, between Greenwich and Eltham, threatening either to bid* battle to the King (for now the seas went higher¹⁰ than to Morton and Bray), or to take* London within his view,¹¹ imagining with themselves there to find no less fear than wealth.

But to return to the King. When first he heard of this commotion of the Cornishmen occasioned by the subsidy, he was much troubled therewith; not for itself but in regard of the concurrence of other dangers that did hang over him at that time. For he doubted* lest* a war from Scotland, a rebellion from Cornwall, and the practices and conspiracies of Perkin and his partakers would come upon him at once, knowing well that it was a dangerous triplicity* to a monarchy, to have the arms of a foreigner, the discontents of subjects, and the title of a pretender to meet. Nevertheless the occasion took him in some part well provided. For as soon as the parliament had broken up, the King had presently raised a puissant army to war upon Scotland. And King James of Scotland likewise on his part had made great preparations, either for defence or for a new assailing of England. But as for the King's forces, they were not only in preparation but in readiness presently to set forth, under the conduct of Daubeney the Lord Chamberlain. But as soon as the King understood of the rebellion of Cornwall, he stayed those forces, retaining them for his own service and safety. But therewithal he dispatched the Earl of Surrey into the north, for the defence and strength of those parts in case the Scots should stir.

But for the course he held towards the rebels, it was utterly differing from his former custom and practice, which was ever full of forwardness* and celerity to make head against them, or to set upon them as soon as ever they were in action. This he was wont to do; but now, besides that he was attempered* by years, and less in love with dangers by the continued fruition* of a crown, it was a time when the various appearance to his thoughts of perils of several natures and from divers parts did make him judge it his best and surest way to keep his strength together in the seat and centre of his kingdom; according to the ancient Indian emblem¹² – in such a

¹⁰ Greater matters were involved.

¹¹ Under his nose.

¹² Moral fable or allegory; alluding to Plutarch's 'Life' of Alexander the Great, 65, where an Indian sage shows the king a leather skin or bladder as an image of his

swelling season, to hold the hand upon the middle of the bladder, that no side might rise. Besides, there was no necessity put upon him to alter this counsel. For neither did the rebels spoil* the country, in which case it had been dishonour to abandon his people, neither on the other side did their forces gather or increase, which might hasten him to precipitate, and assail them before they grew too strong. And lastly, both reason of estate and war seemed to agree with this course, for that insurrections of base people are commonly more furious in their beginnings. And by this means also he had them the more at vantage, being tired and harassed with a long march; and more at mercy, being cut off far from their country, and therefore not able by any sudden flight to get to retreat, and to renew the troubles.

When therefore the rebels were encamped in Blackheath upon the hill, whence they might behold the city of London and the fair valley about it, the King, knowing well that it stood him upon¹³ by how much the more he had hitherto protracted the time in not encountering them, by so much the sooner to dispatch* with them; that it might appear to have been no coldness* in fore-slowing* but wisdom in choosing his time, resolved with all speed to assail them, and yet with that providence and surety as should leave little to venture or fortune. And having very great and puissant forces about him, the better to master all events and accidents he divided them into three parts. The first was led by the Earl of Oxford in chief, assisted by the Earls of Essex and Suffolk. These noblemen were appointed, with some corners* of horse and bands of foot, and good store of artillery, wheeling about to put themselves beyond the hill where the rebels were encamped, and to beset* all the skirts* and descents thereof except those that lay towards London, thereby to have these wild beasts as it were in a toil.* The second part of his forces (which were those that were to be most in action, and upon which he relied most for the fortune of the day) he did assign to be led by the Lord Chamberlain, who was appointed to set upon the rebels in front, from that side which is towards London. The third part of his forces (being likewise great and brave forces) he retained about himself, to be ready upon all events, to restore the fight or

kingdom. When pressed down in one place the air inside forced it to rise in another: only when pressed in the middle did the surface remain even.

¹³ Was most important to him.

consummate the victory, and meanwhile to secure the city. And for that purpose he encamped in person in Saint George's Fields, putting himself between the city and the rebels.

But the City of London, especially at the first upon the near encamping of the rebels, was in great tumult; as it useth to be¹⁴ with wealthy and populous cities, especially those which, being for greatness and fortune queens of their regions, do seldom see out of their windows or from their towers an army of enemies. But that which troubled them most was the conceit* that they dealt with a rout* of people with whom there was no composition or condition,¹⁵ or orderly treating* if need were, but likely to be bent altogether upon rapine* and spoil. And although they had heard that the rebels had behaved themselves quietly and modestly by the way as they went, yet they doubted much that would not last, but rather make them more hungry and more in appetite to fall upon spoil in the end. Wherefore there was great running to and fro of people, some to the gates, some to the walls, some to the water-side, giving themselves alarms and panic fears continually.

Nevertheless both Tate the Lord Mayor, and Shaw and Haddon the Sheriffs did their parts stoutly and well in arming and ordering the people; and the King likewise did adjoin some captains of experience in the wars to advise and assist the citizens. But soon after, when they understood that the King had so ordered the matter that the rebels must win three battles before they could approach the city, and that he had put his own person between the rebels and them, and that the great care* was rather how to impound* the rebels that none of them might escape than that any doubt was made to vanquish them, they grew to be quiet and out of fear; the rather for the confidence they reposed (which was not small) in the three leaders, Oxford, Essex, and Dawbeney, all men well famed and loved amongst the people. As for Jasper Duke of Bedford, whom the King used to employ with the first in his wars, he was then sick and died soon after.

It was the two and twentieth of June, and a Saturday¹⁶ (which was the day of the week the King fancied¹⁷), when the battle was

¹⁴ Is usual.

¹⁵ Agreeing conditions for peace.

¹⁶ In fact 17 June 1497.

¹⁷ Thought auspicious; see above p. 11.

fought; though the King had by all the art he could devise given out a false day, as if he prepared to give the rebels battle on the Monday following, the better to find them unprovided and in disarray. The lords that were appointed to circle the hill had some days before planted themselves as at the receipt,¹⁸ in places convenient. In the afternoon towards the decline of the day (which was done the better to keep the rebels in opinion that they should not fight that day), the Lord Dawbeney marched on towards them, and first beat some troops of them from Deptford-bridge; where they fought manfully, but being in no great number were soon driven back, and fled up to their main army upon the hill. The army¹⁹ at that time hearing of the approach of the King's forces, were putting themselves in array not without much confusion. But neither had they placed upon the first high ground towards the bridge any forces to second the troops below that kept the bridge, neither had they brought forwards their main battle* (which stood in array far into the heath) near to the ascent of the hill;²⁰ so that the Earl with his forces mounted the hill and recovered* the plain without resistance. The Lord Dawbeney charged them with great fury, inso-much as it had like²¹ by accident to have brandled* the fortune of the day. For by inconsiderate forwardness in fighting in the head of his troops he was taken by the rebels, but immediately rescued and delivered. The rebels maintained the fight for a small time, and for their persons shewed no want of courage. But being ill armed and ill led, and without horse or artillery, they were with no great difficulty cut in pieces²² and put to flight. And for their three leaders, the Lord Audley, the blacksmith, and Flammock, as commonly the captains of commotions are but half-couraged men, suffered themselves to be taken alive. The number slain on the rebels' part were some two thousand men: their army amounting, as it is said, unto the number sixteen thousand. The rest were in effect all taken, for that the hill (as was said) was encompassed with the King's forces round about. On the King's part there died about three hundred, most of them shot with arrows, which were reported to be of

¹⁸ To intercept or ambush the rebels.

¹⁹ The rebels' main force.

²⁰ So giving up their vantage ground.

²¹ Was in danger of

²² Routed.

the length of a taylor's yard,²³ so strong and mighty a bow the Cornishmen were said to draw.

The victory thus obtained the King created divers bannerets*, as well upon Blackheath, where his lieutenant had won the field (whither he rode in person to perform the said creation*), as in St George's Fields, where his own person had been encamped. And for matter of liberality, he did by open edict give the goods of all the prisoners unto those that had taken them, either to take them in kind or compound* for them as they could. After matter of honour and liberality followed matter of severity and execution. The Lord Audley was led from Newgate to Tower-Hill in a paper coat²⁴ painted with his own arms, the arms reversed,²⁵ the coat torn; and at Tower-Hill beheaded. Flammock and the blacksmith were hanged drawn and quartered at Tyburn,²⁶ the blacksmith taking pleasure upon the hurdle²⁷ (as it seemeth by words that he uttered) to think that he should be famous in after-times. The King was once in mind to have sent down Flammock and the blacksmith to have been executed in Cornwall, for the more terror. But being advertised that the country was yet unquiet and boiling*, he thought better not to irritate the people further. All the rest were pardoned by proclamation, and to take out their pardons under seal²⁸ as many as would. So that more than the blood drawn in the field, the King did satisfy himself with the lives of only three offenders for the expiation of this great rebellion.

It was a strange thing to observe the variety and inequality of the King's executions and pardons, and a man would think it at the first a kind of lottery or chance. But looking into it more nearly one shall find there was reason for it, much more perhaps than after so long a distance of time we can now discern. In the Kentish commotion (which was but an handful of men) there were executed to the number of one hundred and fifty; but in this so mighty a rebellion but three. Whether it were that the King put to account the men that were slain in the field; or that he was not willing to be

²³ Three feet (one metre) long.

²⁴ Mock armour.

²⁵ To wear a heraldic emblem upside down is to degrade it.

²⁶ The execution place for common criminals (noblemen were beheaded).

²⁷ 'A wooden sledge on which condemned men were paraded through the streets on their way to the gallows' (ed. Lockyer).

²⁸ Were permitted to buy official pardons (under the Great Seal).

severe in a popular cause; or that the harmless behaviour of this people, that came from the west of England to the east without mischief (almost) or spoil of the country, did somewhat mollify him and move him to compassion; or lastly, that he made a great difference between people that did rebel upon wantonness*, and them that did rebel upon want.*

After the Cornishmen were defeated there came from Calais to the King an honourable ambassage from the French King, which had arrived at Calais a month before, and was there stayed in respect of the troubles; but honourably entertained and defrayed.²⁹ The King at their first coming sent unto them and prayed them to have patience till a little smoke that was raised in his country were over, which would soon be; slighting (as his manner was) that openly, which nevertheless he intended* seriously.

This ambassage concerned no great affair, but only the prolongation of days for payment of money, and some other particulars of the frontiers*; and it was indeed but a wooing ambassage, with good respects to entertain the King in good affection. But nothing was done or handled to the derogation of the King's late treaty with the Italians.

But during the time that the Cornishmen were in their march towards London, the King of Scotland, well advertised of all that passed, and knowing himself sure of a war from England whensoever those stirs were appeased, neglected not his opportunity; but thinking the King had his hands full, entered the frontiers of England again with an army, and besieged the castle of Norham in person with part of his forces, sending the rest to forage the country. But Fox Bishop of Durham, a wise man and one that could see through the present to the future, doubting as much³⁰ before, had caused his castle of Norham to be strongly fortified and furnished with all kind of munition; and had manned it likewise with a very great number of tall* soldiers more than for the proportion of the castle,³¹ reckoning rather upon a sharp assault than a long siege. And for the country likewise, he had caused the people to withdraw their cattle and goods into fast* places, that were not of easy approach, and sent in post* to the Earl of Surrey (who was

²⁹ Their expenses paid.

³⁰ Foreseeing all this.

³¹ More than was needed to defend the castle.

not far off in Yorkshire) to come in diligence³² to the succour. So as the Scottish King both failed of doing good³³ upon the castle, and his men had but a catching* harvest of their spoils. And when he understood that the Earl of Surrey was coming on with great forces he returned back into Scotland. The Earl finding the castle freed, and the enemy retired, pursued with all celerity into Scotland, hoping to have overtaken the Scottish King, and to have given him battle. But not attaining him in time, sat down before the castle of Aton, one of the strongest places (then esteemed) between Berwick and Edinburgh, which in a small time he took. And soon after the Scottish King retiring further into his country, and the weather being extraordinary foul and stormy, the Earl returned into England. So that the expeditions on both parts were (in effect) but a castle taken and a castle distressed*; not answerable* to the puissance of the forces, nor to the heat of the quarrel, nor to the greatness of the expectation.

[An Embassy from Spain; Peace-moves with Scotland]

Amongst these troubles both civil and external came into England from Spain, Peter Hialas,¹ some call him Elias (surely he was the forerunner of the good hap* that we enjoy at this day: for his ambassage set* the truce between England and Scotland, the truce drew on the peace, the peace the marriage, and the marriage the union of the kingdoms); a man of great wisdom and (as those times were) not unlearned; sent from Ferdinando and Isabella, Kings of Spain, unto the King to treat a marriage between Catherine, their second daughter, and Prince Arthur. This treaty was by him set in a very good way and almost brought to perfection.* But it so fell out by the way that upon some conference which he had with the King touching this business, the King (who had a great dexterity in getting suddenly into the bosom of ambassadors of foreign Princes, if he liked the men, insomuch as he would many times

³² As fast as possible.

³³ Making a successful assault.

¹ Pedro Ayala, the Spanish ambassador to England, empowered to arrange the marriage between Catherine of Aragon and Prince Arthur; used by King Henry in a peace treaty with Scotland

communicate with them of his own affairs, yea and employ them in his service), fell into speech and discourse incidently, concerning the ending of the debates and differences with Scotland. For the King naturally did not love the barren wars with Scotland, though he made his profit of the noise of them, and he wanted not² in the council of Scotland those that would advise their King to meet him at the half way, and to give over the war with England; pretending to be good patriots but indeed favouring the affairs of the King.³ Only his heart* was too great to begin with Scotland for the motion of peace.

On the other side he had met with an ally of⁴ Ferdinando of Aragon as fit for his turn as could be. For after that King Ferdinando had, upon assured confidence of the marriage to succeed*, taken upon him the person of a fraternal ally to the King, he would not let*, in a Spanish gravity*, to counsel the King in his own affairs. And the King on his part, not being wanting to himself but making use of every man's humours, made his advantage of this in such things as he thought either not decent or not pleasant to proceed from himself, putting them off as done⁵ by the counsel of Ferdinando. Wherefore he was content that Hialas, as in a matter moved and advised from Hialas himself, should go into Scotland to treat of a concord between the two Kings. Hialas took it upon him, and coming to the Scottish King after he had with much art brought King James to hearken* to the more safe and quiet counsels, writ* unto the King that he hoped that peace would with no great difficulty cement and close if he would send some wise and temperate counsellor of his own, that might treat of the conditions. Whereupon the King directed Bishop Fox (who at that time was at his castle of Norham) to confer with Hialas, and they both to treat with some commissioners deputed from the Scottish King.

The commissioners on both sides met. But after much dispute upon the articles and conditions of peace propounded upon either part they could not conclude a peace. The chief impediment thereof was the demand of the King to have Perkin delivered into his hands,

² Did not lack.

³ Henry.

⁴ In: that is, as an adviser.

⁵ Giving out that they were done.

as a reproach to all Kings and a person not protected by the law of nations. The King of Scotland on the other side peremptorily denied so to do, saying that he for his part was no competent judge of Perkin's title*, but that he had received him as a suppliant, protected him as a person fled for refuge, espoused him with his kinswoman and aided him with his arms, upon the belief that he was a Prince; and therefore that he could not now with his honour so unrip* and in a sort put a lie upon all that he had said and done before as to deliver him up to his enemies.

The Bishop likewise (who had certain proud instructions from the King, at the least in the front,⁶ though there were a pliant clause⁷ at the foot that remitted all to the Bishop's discretion, and required him by no means to break off in ill terms), after that he had failed to obtain the delivery of Perkin did move* a second point of his instructions, which was that the Scottish King would give the King an interview in person at Newcastle. But this being reported to the Scottish King, his answer was that he meant to treat a peace and not to go a begging for it. The Bishop, also according to another article of his instructions, demanded restitution of the spoils taken by the Scottish or damages for the same. But the Scottish commissioners answered that that was but as water spilt upon the ground, which could not be gotten up again, and that the King's people were better able to bear the loss than their master to repair it. But in the end, as persons capable of reason on both sides, they made rather a kind of recess* than a breach of treaty, and concluded upon a truce for some months following.

But the King of Scotland, though he would not formally retract* his judgement of Perkin, wherein he had engaged himself so far, yet in his private opinion, upon often* speech with the Englishmen and divers other advertisements, began to suspect him for a counterfeit. Wherefore in a noble fashion he called him unto him, and recounted the benefits and favours that he had done him in making him his ally, and in provoking a mighty and opulent King by an offensive war in his quarrel, for the space of two years together; nay more, that he had refused an honourable peace, whereof he had a fair offer if he would have delivered him, and that

⁶ In appearance.

⁷ A flexible paragraph.

to keep his promise with him he had deeply offended both his nobles and people, whom he might not hold in any long discontent; and therefore required him⁸ to think of his own fortunes, and to choose out some fitter place for his exile, telling him withal that he could not say but the English had forsaken him before the Scottish, for that upon two several* trials* none had declared themselves on his side. But nevertheless he⁹ would make good what he said to him at his first receiving, which was that he should not repent him for putting himself into his hands; for that he would not cast him off, but help him with shipping and means to transport him where he should desire.

Perkin, not descending at all from his stage-like greatness, answered the King in few words that he saw his time was not yet come, but whatsoever his fortunes were he should both think and speak honour of the King. Taking his leave, he would not think on¹⁰ Flanders, doubting* it was but hollow* ground for him since the treaty of the Archduke concluded the year before; but took his lady, and such followers as would not leave him, and sailed over into Ireland.¹¹

This twelfth year¹² of the King, a little before this time, Pope Alexander, who loved best those Princes that were furthest off and with whom he had least to do, and taking very thankfully the King's late entrance into league for the defence of Italy, did remunerate him with an hallowed sword and cap of maintenance,¹³ sent by his Nuncio. Pope Innocent had done the like,¹⁴ but it was not received in that glory. For the King appointed the Mayor and his brethren to meet the Pope's orator at London-bridge, and all the streets between the bridge-foot and the palace of Paul's (where the King then lay) were garnished¹⁵ with the citizens, standing in their liver-

⁸ Warbeck.

⁹ King James

¹⁰ Consider (as a place of refuge).

¹¹ Perkin left Scotland in July 1497, the truce being signed the following October.

¹² 1497. In fact, the Pope's gift (one of three such honours he bestowed on Henry) was presented in November 1496, after Henry had joined the Holy League in July (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 240-1).

¹³ The biretta (a square cap worn by clerics of the Catholic church) given to the King of England to symbolize the Pope's approval, and carried before the monarch on solemn occasions.

¹⁴ In 1489, during the war with France.

¹⁵ Adorned (the translation adds, at the express orders of the King).

ies.¹⁶ And the morrow after, being Allhallows-day,¹⁷ the King, attended with many of his prelates and nobles and principal courtiers, went in procession to Paul's, and the cap and sword were borne before him. And after the procession, the King himself remaining seated in the quire*, the Lord Archbishop upon the greese* of the quire made a long oration setting forth the greatness and eminency of that honour which the Pope (in these ornaments and ensigns of benediction) had done the King, and how rarely and upon what high deserts they used to be bestowed; and then recited the King's principal acts and merits, which had made him appear worthy in the eyes of his Holiness of this great honour.

[Perkin Warbeck's Cornish Invasion]

All this while the rebellion of Cornwall (whereof we have spoken) seemed to have no relation to Perkin, save that perhaps Perkin's proclamation had stricken upon the right vein in promising to lay* down exactions and payments, and so had made them now and then have a kind thought on Perkin. But now these bubbles by much stirring began to meet, as they use to do upon the top of water. The King's lenity (by that time the Cornish rebels who were taken and pardoned, and as it was said many of them sold by them that had taken them for twelve pence and two shillings apiece, were come down into their country) had rather emboldened* them than reclaimed* them. Insomuch as they stuck* not to say to their neighbours and countrymen that the King did well to pardon them, for that he knew he should leave few subjects in England if he hanged all that were of their mind; and began whetting and inciting one another to renew the commotion. Some of the subtlest* of them, hearing of Perkin's being in Ireland, found means to send to him to let him know that if he would come over to them they would serve him.

When Perkin heard this news he began to take heart again, and advised upon it with his council, which were principally three: Herne a mercer* that had fled for debt, Skelton a taylor, and Astley a scrivener* (for secretary Fryon was gone). These told him that he

¹⁶ The uniforms distinguishing the various London companies or guilds.

¹⁷ All Saints Day (1 November).

was mightily overseen*, both when he went into Kent and when he went into Scotland; the one being a place so near London, and under the King's nose, and the other a nation so distasted* with the people of England that if¹ they had loved him never so well yet they would never have taken his part in that company. But if he had been so happy as to have been in Cornwall at the first, when the people began to take arms there, he had been² crowned at Westminster before this time. For these Kings (as he had now experience) would sell poor princes for shoes,³ but he must rely wholly upon people;⁴ and therefore advised him to sail over with all possible speed into Cornwall, which accordingly he did, having in his company four small barks with some sixscore or sevenscore fighting-men. He arrived in September at Whitsand-Bay and forthwith came to Bodmin, the blacksmith's town,⁵ where there assembled unto him to the number of three thousand men of the rude* people.

There he set forth a new proclamation, stroking* the people with fair promises and humouring* them with invectives against the King and his government. And as it fareth with smoke that never leeseth itself till it be at the highest,⁶ he did now before his end raise his style*, intitling himself no more Richard Duke of York but Richard the Fourth, King of England. His council advised him by all means to make himself master of some good walled town; as well to make his men find the sweetness of rich spoils, and to allure to him all loose and lost people⁷ by like hopes of booty, as to be a sure retreat to his forces in case they should have any ill day or unlucky chance in the field. Wherefore they took heart to them, and went on and besieged the city of Exeter, the principal town for strength and wealth in those parts.

When they were comen before Exeter they forbore* to use any force at the first but made continual shouts and outcries to terrify

¹ Even if.

² Would have been.

³ For very little.

⁴ The *populus*, ordinary people.

⁵ Where Michael Joseph had lived. Warbeck landed in Cornwall on 7 September 1497, and laid siege to Exeter on the 16th.

⁶ Only disperses when it ascends to its highest point.

⁷ Rogues, vagabonds.

the inhabitants, and did likewise in divers places call and talk to them from under the walls, to join with them and be of their party, telling them that the King⁸ would make them another London if they would be the first town that should acknowledge him. But they had not the wit* to send to them, in any orderly fashion, agents or chosen men to tempt them and to treat with them. The citizens on their part shewed themselves stout* and loyal subjects; neither was there so much as any tumult or division amongst them, but all prepared themselves for a valiant defence and making good* the town. For well they saw that the rebels were of no such number or power that they needed to fear them as yet: and well they hoped that before their numbers increased the King's succours would come in. And howsoever, they thought it the extremest of evils to put themselves at the mercy of those hungry and disorderly people. Wherefore, setting all things in good order within the town, they nevertheless let down with cords from several parts of the walls privily* several messengers (that if one came to mischance another might pass on), which should advertise the King of the state of the town and implore his aid.

Perkin also doubted* that succours would come ere long and therefore resolved to use his utmost force to assault the town. And for that purpose having mounted scaling-ladders in divers places upon the walls, made at the same instant an attempt to force one of the gates. But having no artillery nor engines*, and finding that he could do no good by ramming with logs of timber, nor by the use of iron bars and iron crows* and such other means at hand, he had no way left him but to set one of the gates on fire, which he did. But the citizens well perceiving the danger before the gate could be fully consumed, blocked up the gate and some space about it on the inside with faggots* and other fuel, which they likewise set on fire and so repulsed fire with fire; and in the mean time raised up rampiers⁹ of earth, and cast up deep trenches to serve instead of wall and gate. And for the escaladaes,¹⁰ they had so bad success as the rebels were driven from the walls with the loss of two hundred men.

The King when he heard of Perkin's siege of Exeter, made* sport with it; and said to them that were about him that the King of

⁸ Warbeck, calling himself King Richard

⁹ Ramparts, protective banks of earth.

¹⁰ Attempts at scaling the walls.

rake-hells* was landed in the west, and that he hoped now to have the honour to see him, which he could never yet do.¹¹ And it appeared plainly to those that were about the King that he was indeed much joyed with the news of Perkin's being in English ground, where he could have no retreat by land; thinking now that he should be cured of those privy stitches¹² which he had had long about his heart, and had sometimes broken his sleep in the midst of all his felicity. And to set all men's hearts on fire, he did by all possible means let it appear that those that should now do him service to make an end of these troubles should be no less accepted of him than he that came upon the eleventh hour¹³ and had the whole wages of the day.

Therefore now, like the end of a play a great number came upon the stage at once. He sent the Lord Chamberlain, and the Lord Brooke, and Sir Rice ap Thomas, with expedite* forces to speed to Exeter to the rescue of the town, and to spread the fame* of his own following in person with a royal army. The Earl of Devonshire and his son, with the Carews and the Fulfordes and other principal persons of Devonshire (uncalled from¹⁴ the court, but hearing that the King's heart was so much bent upon this service), made haste with troops that they had raised to be the first that should succour the city of Exeter and prevent* the King's succours. The Duke of Buckingham likewise with many brave gentlemen put themselves in arms, not staying* either the King's or Lord Chamberlain's coming on, but making a body of forces of themselves the more to endear their merit, signifying to the King their readiness, and desiring to know his pleasure. So that according to the proverb,¹⁵ in the coming down every Saint did help.

Perkin, hearing this thunder of arms and preparations against him from so many parts, raised his siege and marched to Taunton, beginning already to squint* one eye upon the crown and another upon the sanctuary; though the Cornishmen were become like metal often fired and quenched, churlish*, and that would sooner break than bow, swearing and vowing not to leave him till the uttermost

¹¹ Had never been able to do.

¹² Secret pains.

¹³ Alluding to the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. 20: 9).

¹⁴ Not summoned by.

¹⁵ Untraced.

drop of their blood were spilt. He was at his rising from¹⁶ Exeter between six and seven thousand strong, many having comen unto him after he was set before Exeter, upon fame* of so great an enterprise and to partake of the spoil; though upon the raising of the siege some did slip away. When he was comen near Taunton he dissembled all fear, and seemed all the day to use diligence in preparing all things ready to fight. But about midnight he fled with threescore horse to Beaulieu in the New Forest, where he and divers of his company registered themselves sanctuary-men, leaving his Cornishmen to the four winds, but yet thereby easing them of their vow; and using his wonted compassion, not to be by* when his subjects' blood should be spilt. The King as soon as he heard of Perkin's flight, sent presently five hundred horse to pursue and apprehend him before he should get either to the sea or to that same little island called a sanctuary. But they came too late for the latter of these. Therefore all they could do was to beset* the sanctuary, and to maintain a strong watch about it, till the King's pleasure were further known.

As for the rest of the rebels, they (being destituted of their head¹⁷) without stroke stricken¹⁸ submitted themselves unto the King's mercy. And the King, who commonly drew blood (as physicians do) rather to save life than to spill it, and was never cruel when he was secure, now he saw the danger was past, pardoned them all in the end, except some few desperate* persons which he reserved to be executed, the better to set off* his mercy towards the rest. There were also sent with all speed some horse to Saint Michael's Mount in Cornwall, where the Lady Katherine Gordon¹⁹ was left by her husband, whom in all fortunes she entirely loved; adding the virtues of a wife to the virtues of her sex. The King sent in the greater diligence*, not knowing whether she might be with child, whereby the business would not have ended in Perkin's person. When she was brought to the King it was commonly said that the King received her not only with compassion but with affection, pity giving more impression* to her excellent beauty. Wherefore comforting her, to serve as well his eye as his fame, he sent her to his

¹⁶ Leaving.

¹⁷ Deprived of their leader.

¹⁸ Without having struck a blow.

¹⁹ Who had married Perkin Warbeck.

Queen to remain with her; giving her very honourable allowance for the support of her estate, which she enjoyed both during the King's life and many years after. The name of the White Rose, which had been given to her husband's false title, was continued in common speech to her true beauty.

The King went forwards on his journey and made a joyful entrance into Exeter, where he gave the citizens great commendations and thanks; and taking the sword he wore from his side, he gave it to the Mayor and commanded it should be ever after carried before him. There also he caused to be executed some of the ring-leaders of the Cornishmen, in sacrifice to the citizens whom they had put in fear and trouble. At Exeter the King consulted with his council whether he should offer life to Perkin if he would quit the sanctuary and voluntarily submit himself. The council were divided in opinion. Some advised the King to take him out of sanctuary perforce* and to put him to death, as in a case of necessity, which in itself dispenseth with consecrated places and things; wherein they doubted not also but the King should find the Pope tractable to ratify his deed²⁰ either by declaration or at least by indulgence.²¹ Others were of opinion, since all was now safe and no further hurt could be done, that it was not worth the exposing of the King to new scandal and envy. A third sort fell upon the opinion²² that it was not possible for the King ever either to satisfy the world well touching the imposture, or to learn out the bottom²³ of the conspiracy, except by promise of life and pardon and other fair means he should get Perkin into his hands.

But they did all in their preambles* much bemoan the King's case with a kind of indignation at his fortune, that a Prince of his high wisdom and virtue should have been so long and so oft exercised* and vexed with idols.* But the King said that it was the vexation of God Almighty himself to be vexed with idols, and therefore that that was not to trouble any of his friends; and that for himself he always despised them, but was grieved that they had put his people to such trouble and misery. But in conclusion he leaned to the third opinion, and so sent some to deal with Perkin; who

²⁰ Willing to approve his action.

²¹ A fine paid in remission of sins.

²² Took the view

²³ To know in full detail.

seeing himself a prisoner and destitute of all hopes, having tried princes and people great and small, and found all either false, faint, or unfortunate, did gladly accept of the condition. The King did also while he was at Exeter appoint the Lord Darcy and others commissioners for the fining of all such as were of any value, and had any hand or partaking in the aid or comfort* of Perkin or the Cornishmen, either in the field or in the flight. These commissioners proceeded with such strictness and severity as did much obscure the King's mercy in sparing of blood, with the bleeding* of so much treasure.

Perkin was brought unto the King's court, but not to the King's presence; though the King to satisfy his curiosity saw him sometimes out of a window or in passage. He was in shew* at liberty, but guarded with all care and watch that was possible, and willed to follow the King to London. But from his first appearance upon the stage in his new person* of a sycophant* or juggler, instead of his former person of a Prince, all men may think how he was exposed to the derision not only of the courtiers but also of the people, who flocked about him as he went along, that one might know afar off where the owl was by the flight of birds; some mocking, some wondering, some cursing, some prying and picking matter out of his countenance and gesture to talk of. So that the false honour and respects which he had so long enjoyed was plentifully repaid in scorn and contempt.

As soon as he was comen to London the King gave also the City the solace* of this may-game*. For he was conveyed leisurely on horseback, but not in any ignominious fashion, through Cheapside and Cornhill to the Tower, and from thence back again unto Westminster with the churmne* of a thousand taunts* and reproaches. But to amend* the show, there followed a little distance off²⁴ Perkin, an inward* counsellor of his, one that had been serjeant farrier* to the King. This fellow, when Perkin took sanctuary, chose rather to take an holy habit than a holy place, and clad* himself like an hermit, and in that weed* wandered about the country till he was discovered and taken. But this man was bound hand and foot upon the horse, and came not back with Perkin but was left at the Tower, and within few days after executed.

²⁴ Behind.

Soon after, now that Perkin could tell better what himself was, he was diligently examined; and after his confession taken, an extract was made of such parts of them as were thought fit to be divulged*, which was printed and dispersed abroad. Wherein the King did himself no right,²⁵ for as there was a laboured tale of particulars of Perkin's father and mother and grandsire and grandmother and uncles and cousins, by names and surnames, and from what places he travelled up and down, so there was little or nothing to purpose of any thing concerning his designs* or any practices* that had been held* with him; nor the Duchess of Burgundy herself, that all the world did take knowledge of as the person that had put life and being into the whole business, so much as named or pointed at. So that men missing of that they looked for, looked about for they knew not what, and were in more doubt than before. But the King chose rather not to satisfy than to kindle* coals. At that time also it did not appear by any new examinations or commitments* that any other person of quality was discovered or appeached*, though the King's closeness* made that a doubt dormant.*

About this time a great fire in the night-time suddenly began at the King's palace of Sheen, near unto the King's own lodgings; whereby a great part of the building was consumed, with much costly household-stuff; which gave the King occasion of building from the ground that fine pile of Richmond,²⁶ which is now standing.

[Sebastian Cabot Discovers Newfoundland, 1497]

Somewhat before this time also, there fell out a memorable accident.* There was one Sebastian Cabot,¹ a Venetian, dwelling in Bristol, a man seen* and expert in cosmography and navigation. This man, seeing the success and emulating perhaps the enterprise of Christopherus Columbus in that fortunate discovery towards the south-west which had been by him made some six years before,²

²⁵ Did his cause no good

²⁶ This house, burned down in December 1497, was rebuilt in 1501.

¹ Sebastian Cabot (c.1477-1557), son of John Cabot (or Gabato), was born in Bristol and entered Henry's service in 1495. It was in fact John Cabot who sailed in May 1498. Bacon takes his information from Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (Anderson, *Biographical Truth*, pp. 171, 232 n.5)

² Columbus saw the light on San Salvador on 3 October 1492.

conceited* with himself that lands might likewise be discovered towards the north-west. And surely, it may be he had more firm and pregnant conjectures of it than Columbus had of his at the first. For the two great islands of the old and new world, being in the shape and making of them broad towards the north and pointed towards the south, it is likely that the discovery first began where the lands did nearest meet. And there had been before that time a discovery of some lands which they took to be islands, and were indeed the continent of America, towards the north-west. And it may be that some relation of this nature, coming afterwards to the knowledge of Columbus and by him suppressed (desirous rather to make his enterprise the child of his science* and fortune, than the follower of a former discovery), did give him better assurance that all was not sea from the west of Europe and Africke unto Asia, than either Seneca's prophecy,³ or Plato's antiquities,⁴ or the nature of the tides and land winds and the like, which were the conjectures that were given out whereupon he should have relied; though I am not ignorant that it was likewise laid unto the casual* and wind-beaten discovery a little before of a Spanish pilot who died in the house of Columbus. But this Cabot, bearing the King in hand* that he would find out an island endued with rich commodities, procured him to man and victual a ship at Bristol for the discovery of that island, with whom ventured also three small ships of London merchants, fraught with some gross and slight wares, fit for commerce with barbarous people.

He sailed, as he affirmed at his return (and made a card* thereof), very far westwards, with a quarter of the north⁵ on the north side of Terra de Labrador, until he came to the latitude of sixty-seven degrees and a half, finding the seas still open.⁶ It is certain also that the King's fortune had a tender* of that great empire of the West-Indies.⁷ Neither was it a refusal on the King's part, but a delay by accident that put* by so great an acquest.* For Christopherus

³ In *Quaestiones naturales* iv.ii, concerning the Atlantic.

⁴ The legends recorded in Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias* concerning the island Atlantis, supposedly opposite the Straits of Gibraltar, which had sunk below the ocean.

⁵ North-west.

⁶ Not sighting land.

⁷ The King hoped to acquire the West Indies by funding this expedition.

Columbus, refused by the King of Portugal (who would not embrace at once both east and west⁸), employed his brother Bartholomeus Columbus unto King Henry to negotiate for his discovery. And it so fortuneth* that he⁹ was taken by pirates at sea, by which accidental impediment he was long ere he came to the King; so long, that before he had obtained a capitulation* with the King for his brother the enterprise by him¹⁰ was achieved, and so the West-Indies by providence were then reserved for the crown of Castilia. Yet this sharpened the King so that not only in this voyage, but again in the sixteenth year of his reign, and likewise in the eighteenth thereof, he granted forth new commissions for the discovery and investing* of unknown lands.

[Disputes on the Scottish Border]

In his fourteenth year¹ also, by God's wonderful providence, that boweth things unto his will, and hangeth great weights upon small wires, there fell out a trifling and untoward* accident that drew on great and happy effects. During the truce with Scotland there were certain Scottish young gentlemen that came into Norham town, and there made merry with some of the English of the town; and having little to do, went sometimes forth and would stand looking upon the castle. Some of the garrison of the castle, observing this their doing twice or thrice, and having not their minds purged of the late ill blood of hostility, either suspected them or quarrelled* them for spies. Whereupon they fell at ill words, and from words to blows, so that many were wounded of either side; and the Scottishmen, being strangers in the town, had the worst, insomuch that some of them were slain and the rest made haste home. The matter being complained on and often debated before the Wardens of Marches² of both sides, and no good order taken, the King of Scotland took it to

⁸ In the Portuguese search for a sea route to India via Africa, King John was convinced that it could be reached by the eastward voyage.

⁹ Bartholomeus.

¹⁰ Christopherus.

¹ In November 1498.

² Crown officials responsible for maintaining order along the borders.

himself,¹ and being much kindled*, sent a herald to the King⁴ to make protestation that if reparation were not done according to the conditions of the truce his King did denounce war. The King, who had often tried fortune and was inclined to peace, made answer that what had been done was utterly against his will and without his privity*; but if the garrison soldiers had been in fault he would see them punished, and the truce in all points to be preserved. But this answer seemed to the Scottish King but a delay to make the complaint breathe* out with time, and therefore it did rather exasperate him than satisfy him. Bishop Fox, understanding from the King that the Scottish King was still discontent and impatient, being troubled that the occasion of breaking the truce should grow from his men, sent many humble and deprecatory* letters to the Scottish King to appease him. Whereupon King James, mollified by the Bishop's submiss* and eloquent letters, writ back unto him that though he were in part moved by his letters yet he should not be fully satisfied except he spake with him, as well about the compounding* of the present differences as about other matters that might concern the good of both kingdoms.

The Bishop, advising first with the King, took his journey for Scotland. The meeting was at Melrose, an abbey of the Cistercians where the King then abode. The King first roundly* uttered unto the Bishop his offence conceived for the insolent breach of truce by his men of Norham-castle; whereunto Bishop Fox made such an humble and smooth answer as it was like oil* into the wound, whereby it began to heal. And this was done in the presence of the King and his council. After* the King spake with the Bishop apart and opened himself unto him, saying that these temporary truces and peaces were soon made and soon broken, but that he desired a straiter* amity with the King of England; discovering* his mind, that if the King would give him in marriage the Lady Margaret, his eldest daughter, that indeed might be a knot indissoluble; that he knew well what place and authority the Bishop deservedly had with his master; therefore if he would take the business to heart and deal

¹ Took offence.

⁴ Henry VII.

in it effectually, he doubted not but it would succeed well. The Bishop answered soberly that he thought himself rather happy* than worthy to be an instrument in such a matter, but would do his best endeavour. Wherefore the Bishop returning to the King and giving him account of what had passed, and finding the King more than well disposed⁵ in it, gave the King advice first to proceed to a conclusion of peace, and then to go on with the treaty of marriage by degrees.⁶ Hereupon a peace was concluded, which was published a little before Christmas in the fourteenth year of the King's reign, to continue for both the Kings' lives and the over-liver* of them and a year after. In this peace there was an article contained that no Englishman should enter into Scotland, and no Scottishman into England, without letters commendatory from the Kings of either nation. This at the first sight might seem a means to continue a strangeness* between the nations, but it was done to lock in the borderers.⁷

This year there was also born to the King a third son,⁸ who was christened by the name of Edmond, and shortly after died. And much about the same time came news of the death of Charles the French King,⁹ for whom there were celebrated solemn and princely obsequies.

[Perkin Warbeck: The Last Act]

It was not long but Perkin, who was made of quicksilver (which is hard to hold or imprison) began to stir. For deceiving his keepers,¹ he took him to his heels and made speed to the sea-coast. But presently all corners were laid* for him, and such diligent pursuit and search made as he was fain to turn back and get him to the house of Bethlehem, called the Priory of Sheen (which had the privilege of sanctuary), and put himself into the hands of the Prior of that

⁵ Henry had set up a commission to discuss this possibility a year earlier.

⁶ By stages. The peace treaty was settled in July 1499, negotiations for the marriage resuming in September, but only being concluded in 1502. The wedding took place in 1503.

⁷ Prevent hostilities between these quarrelsome inhabitants.

⁸ Born in 1499, he died in 1500. Three other children of the King died in infancy; four survived.

⁹ Charles VIII died 7 April 1498.

¹ He was under surveillance, not locked up, escaping in June 1498.

monastery. The Prior was thought an holy man, and much revered in those days. He came to the King and besought the King for Perkin's life only, leaving him otherwise to the King's discretion. Many about the King were again more hot than ever to have the King to take him forth and hang him. But the King, that had an high stomach* and could not hate any that he despised, bid take him forth and set the knave in the stocks. And so promising the Prior his life,² he caused him to be brought forth. And within two or three days after, upon a scaffold set up in the palace-court at Westminster, he was fettered and set in the stocks for the whole day. And the next day after the like was done by him at the cross in Cheapside, and in both places he read his confession of which we made mention before, and was from Cheapside conveyed and laid up in the Tower. Notwithstanding all this, the King was (as was partly touched before) grown to be such a partner with fortune as nobody could tell what actions the one and what the other owned. For it was believed generally that Perkin was betrayed, and that this escape was not without the King's privity, who had him all the time of his flight in a line*; and that the King did this to pick a quarrel to him, to put him to death, and to be rid of him at once;³ which is not probable, for that the same instruments who observed him in his flight might have kept him from getting into sanctuary.

But it was ordained* that this winding-ivy of a Plantagenet should kill the true tree itself. For Perkin, after he had been a while in the Tower, began to insinuate himself into the favour and kindness of his keepers, servants to the Lieutenant of the Tower, Sir John Digby, being four in number: Strangeways, Blewet, Astwood, and Long-Roger. These varlets* with mountains of promises he sought to corrupt, to obtain his escape. But knowing well that his own fortunes were made so contemptible as he could feed no man's hopes, and by hopes he must work for rewards he had none, he had contrived with himself a vast and tragical plot, which was to draw into his company Edward Plantagenet Earl of Warwick,⁴ then pris-

² To preserve Warbeck alive

³ Speed suggested that Henry had allowed the escape.

⁴ Edward, son of George Duke of Clarence, and heir to the house of York, was imprisoned in the Tower shortly after Henry's victory at Bosworth in 1485 (aged fifteen), and stayed there until his execution on 29 November 1499, shortly after Warbeck's.

oner in the Tower, whom the weary life of a long imprisonment and the often* and renewing fears of being put to death had softened to take any impression of counsel for his liberty. This young Prince he thought these servants would look upon, though not upon himself. And therefore, after that by some message by one or two of them he had tasted of the Earl's consent, it was agreed that these four should murder their master the Lieutenant secretly in the night, and make their best of such money and portable goods of his as they should find ready at hand; and get the keys of the Tower, and presently let forth Perkin and the Earl. But this conspiracy was revealed in time before it could be executed. And in this again the opinion of the King's great wisdom did surcharge* him with a sinister fame*, that Perkin was but his bait to entrap the Earl of Warwick.

And in the very instant while this conspiracy was in working (as if that also had been the King's industry) it was fatal* that there should break forth a counterfeit Earl of Warwick, a cordwainer's* son, whose name was Ralph Wilford, a young man taught and set on by an Augustin Friar called Patrick. They both from the parts of Suffolk came forwards into Kent, where they did not only privily and underhand give out that this Wilford was the true Earl of Warwick, but also the friar, finding some light credence in the people, took the boldness in the pulpit to declare as much and to incite the people to come in to his aid. Whereupon they were both presently apprehended* and the young fellow executed, and the friar condemned to perpetual imprisonment. This also happening so opportunely to represent the danger to the King's estate from the Earl of Warwick, and thereby to colour* the King's severity that followed; together with the madness of the friar, so vainly* and desperately to divulge a treason before it had gotten any manner of strength; and the saving of the friar's life, which nevertheless was indeed but the privilege of his order;⁵ and the pity in the common people (which if it run in a strong stream doth ever cast up scandal* and envy), made it generally rather talked than believed that all was but the King's device. But howsoever it were, hereupon Perkin (that had offended against grace* now the third time) was at the last

⁵ As a clergyman he could not be executed. The impostor Wilford was hanged on 12 February 1499.

proceeded with*, and by commissioners of Oyer and Determiner⁶ arraigned* at Westminster, upon divers treasons committed and perpetrated after his coming on land within this kingdom (for so the judges advised, for that he was a foreigner), and condemned; and a few days after executed⁷ at Tyburn, where he did again openly read his confession and take it upon his death to be true. This was the end of this little cockatrice* of a King, that was able to destroy those that did not espy* him first. It was one of the longest plays* of that kind that hath been in memory, and might perhaps have had another end, if he had not met with a King both wise, stout*, and fortunate.

As for Perkin's three counsellors,⁸ they had registered themselves sanctuary-men when their master did, and whether upon pardon obtained or continuance within the privilege, they came not to be proceeded with.

There was executed with Perkin the Mayor of Cork and his son, who had been principal abettors of his treasons. And soon after were likewise condemned eight other persons about the Tower-conspiracy, whereof four were the Lieutenant's men. But of those eight but two were executed. And immediately after was arraigned before the Earl of Oxford (then for the time High Steward of England) the poor Prince, the Earl of Warwick; not for the attempt to escape simply, for that was not acted* (and besides, the imprisonment not being for treason, the escape by law could not be treason), but for conspiring with Perkin to raise sedition and to destroy the King. And the Earl confessing the indictment had judgement, and was shortly after beheaded on Tower-hill.

This was also the end not only of this noble and commiserable* person Edward the Earl of Warwick, eldest son to the Duke of Clarence, but likewise of the line-male of the Plantagenets, which had flourished in great royalty and renown from the time of the famous King of England, King Henry the Second. Howbeit it was a race often dipped in their own blood, it hath remained since, only transplanted into other names, as well of the imperial line as of other noble houses. But it was neither guilt of crime, nor reason of

⁶ French title of the courts of assize, having power to 'hear and decide' whether an indictment should be brought for serious criminal offences

⁷ On 16 November 1499.

⁸ Herne, Skelton, and Astley.

state, that could quench the envy* that was upon the King for this execution. So that he thought good to export it out of the land, and to lay it upon his new ally Ferdinando King of Spain.⁹ For these two Kings understanding one another at half a word, so it was that there were letters shewed out of Spain, whereby in the passages concerning the treaty of the marriage, Ferdinando had written to the King in plain terms that he saw no assurance of his succession as long as the Earl of Warwick lived, and that he was loth to send his daughter to troubles and dangers. But hereby as the King did in some part remove the envy from himself, so he did not observe that he did withal bring a kind of malediction and infausting* upon the marriage, as an ill prognostic*; which in event so far proved true, as both Prince Arthur enjoyed a very small time¹⁰ after the marriage; and the Lady Catherine herself (a sad* and a religious woman) long after, when King Henry the Eighth his resolution of a divorce from her was first made known to her, used some words that she had not offended but it was a judgement of God, for that her former marriage was made in blood, meaning that of the Earl of Warwick.

[King Henry in France, 1499]

This fifteenth year of the King there was a great plague both in London and in divers parts of the kingdom. Wherefore the King, after often change of places, whether to avoid the danger of the sickness or to give occasion of an interview with the Archduke,¹ or both, sailed over with his Queen to Calais. Upon his coming thither the Archduke sent an honourable ambassage unto him, as well to welcome him into those parts as to let him know that if it pleased him he would come and do him reverence. But it was said withal, that the King might be pleased to appoint some place that were out

⁹ Bacon had made this judgement in his earlier sketch, (below pp. 212-13). Speed, who quoted it in his *History of Great Britaine* (1611), disagreed, making Henry responsible for conniving at the murder of Warwick.

¹⁰ Married in November 1501, he died the following April, aged sixteen.

¹ Philip, King of Castile, son of Maximilian. The meeting took place on 9 June 1500.

of any walled town or fortress, for that he² had denied the same upon like occasion to the French King. And though he said he made a great difference between the two Kings, yet he would be loth to give a precedent that might make it after to be expected at his hands by another whom he trusted less. The King accepted of the courtesy and admitted of his excuse, and appointed the place to be at Saint Peter's Church without* Calais. But withal he did visit the Archduke with ambassadors sent from himself, which were the Lord St John and the secretary, unto whom the Archduke did the honour as (going to mass at St Omer's) to set the Lord Saint John on his right hand and the secretary on his left, and so to ride between them to church.

The day appointed for the interview the King went on horseback some distance from Saint Peter's Church to receive the Archduke. And upon their approaching the Archduke made haste to light* and offered to hold the King's stirrup at his alighting, which he would not permit, but descending from horseback they embraced with great affection. And withdrawing into the church to a place prepared they had long conference, not only upon the confirmation of former treaties and the freeing of commerce,³ but upon cross-marriages to be had between the Duke of York,⁴ the King's second son, and the Archduke's daughter; and again between Charles, the Archduke's son and heir, and Mary, the King's second daughter. But these blossoms of unripe marriages were but of friendly wishes, and the airs* of loving entertainment; though one of them⁵ came afterwards to a conclusion in treaty, though not in effect.

But during the time that the two Princes conversed and communed together in the suburbs of Calais, the demonstrations on both sides were passing* hearty and affectionate, especially on the part of the Archduke, who (besides that he was a Prince of an excellent good nature) being conscious to himself how drily* the King had been used by his council in the matter of Perkin, did strive by all means to recover it in the King's affection. And having also his ears continually beaten with the counsels of his father and father-in-

² Philip

³ Concerning wool and the sale of cloth, agreed in 1499.

⁴ Prince Henry, afterwards Henry VIII.

⁵ That between Charles and Mary, which took place in 1507.

law,⁶ who in respect of their jealous hatred against the French King did always advise the Archduke to anchor himself upon the amity of King Henry of England, was glad upon this occasion to put in ure* and practice their precepts: calling the King patron, and father, and protector (these very words the King repeats, when he certified of the loving behaviour of the Archduke to the city), and what else he could devise to express his love and observance to the King. There came also to the King the Governor of Picardy and the Bailiff of Amiens, sent from Lewis⁷ the French King to do him honour, and to give him knowledge of his victory and winning of the duchy of Milan.⁸ It seemeth the King was well pleased with the honours he received from those parts while he was at Calais, for he did himself certify all the news and occurrents* of them in every particular from Calais to the Mayor and Aldermen of London, which no doubt made no small talk in the City. For the King, though he could not entertain* the good-will of the citizens as Edward the Fourth did, yet by affability and other princely graces did ever make very much of them, and apply himself to them.

[Death of Cardinal Morton, 1500]

This year¹ also died John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Chancellor of England, and Cardinal. He was a wise man and an eloquent, but in his nature harsh and haughty, much accepted* by the King but envied by the nobility and hated of the people. Neither was his name left out of Perkin's proclamation for any good will, but they would not bring him in amongst the King's casting-counters* because he had the image and superscription upon him of the Pope, in his honour of Cardinal. He wanne* the King with secrecy and diligence, but chiefly because he was his old servant in his less fortunes, and also for that in his affections he was not without an inveterate malice against the house of York, under whom he had been in trouble. He was willing also to take envy from the King

⁶ Maximilian and Ferdinand.

⁷ Louis XII.

⁸ Shortly after becoming King, Louis XII led an army to Milan (which he claimed by right of descent), entering the city on 14 September 1499 without a shot being fired (Ludovico Sforza had fled to the protection of Maximilian.)

¹ 15 September 1500.

more than the King was willing to put* upon him. For the King cared not for subterfuges, but would stand* envy, and appear in any thing² that was to his mind; which made envy still grow upon him, more universal, but less daring. But in the matter of exactions time did after shew that the Bishop in feeding the King's humour did rather temper it. He had been by Richard the Third committed as in custody to the Duke of Buckingham, whom he did secretly incite to revolt from King Richard. But after the Duke was engaged*, and thought the Bishop should have been his chief pilot in the tempest, the Bishop was gotten into the cock-boat* and fled over beyond seas. But whatsoever else³ was in the man he deserveth a most happy memory, in that he was the principal means of joining the two Roses. He died of great years, but of strong health and powers.

[Jubilee at Rome, 1500; Pope Alexander's Promised Crusade, 1501]

The next year, which was the sixteenth year of the King and the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred, was the year of jubilee* at Rome. But Pope Alexander, to save the hazard and charges of men's journeys to Rome, thought good to make over those graces by exchange¹ to such as would pay a convenient rate, seeing they could not come to fetch them. For which purpose was sent into England Gasper Pons, a Spaniard, the Pope's commissioner, better chosen than were the commissioners of Pope Leo afterwards employed for Germany,² for he carried the business with great wisdom and semblance of holiness; insomuch as he levied great sums of money within this land to the Pope's use, with little or no scandal. It was thought the King shared in the money, but it appeareth by a letter which Cardinal Adrian, the King's pensioner, writ to the King from Rome some few years after, that this was not so. For this Cardinal, being to persuade Pope Julius on the King's

² Undertaking.

³ Other blameworthy qualities.

¹ Of money, for papal indulgences.

² The sale of indulgences under Pope Leo X (1475-1521) aroused Luther's anger in 1517, and was one of the factors that sparked off the Reformation.

behalf to expedite the bull of dispensation for the marriage between Prince Henry and the Lady Catherine,³ finding the Pope difficile* in granting thereof, doth use it as a principal argument concerning the King's merit towards that see⁴ that he had touched none of those deniers* which had been levied by Pons in England. But that it might the better appear (for the satisfaction of the common people) that this was consecrate money, the same nuncio* brought unto the King a brief* from the Pope, wherein the King was exhorted and summoned to come in person against the Turk. For that the Pope, out of the care of an universal father, seeing almost under his eyes the successes and progresses of that great enemy of the faith, had had in the conclave*, and with the assistance of the ambassadors of foreign Princes, divers consultations about an holy war and general expedition of Christian Princes against the Turk. Wherein it was agreed and thought fit that the Hungarians, Polonians, and Bohemians should make a war upon Thracia; the French and Spaniards upon Graecia; and that the Pope (willing to sacrifice himself in so good a cause) in person, and in company of the King of England, the Venetians (and such other states as were great in maritime power), would sail with a puissant navy through the Mediterranean unto Constantinople. And that to this end his Holiness had sent nuncios to all Christian Princes, as well for a cessation of all quarrels and differences amongst themselves as for speedy preparations and contributions of forces and treasure for this sacred enterprise.

To this the King (who understood well the court of Rome) made an answer rather solemn than serious,⁵ signifying, 'That no Prince on earth should be more forward and obedient both by his person and by all his possible forces and fortunes to enter into this sacred war than himself. But that the distance of place was such, as no forces that he should raise for the seas could be levied or prepared but with double the charge and double the time (at the least) that they might be from the other Princes that had their territories nearer adjoining. Besides, that neither the manner of his ships

³ Of Aragon. The betrothal was agreed on in June 1503.

⁴ Of Rome; the papal court.

⁵ For form's sake, lacking any serious intention to participate.

(having no galleys⁶) nor the experience of his pilots and mariners could be so apt for those seas as theirs. And therefore that his Holiness might do well to move one of those other Kings, who lay fitter for the purpose, to accompany him by sea, whereby both all things would be no sooner put in readiness, and with less charge; and the emulation* and division of command which might grow between those Kings of France and Spain, if they should both join in the war by land upon Graecia, might be wisely avoided. And that for his part he would not be wanting in aids and contribution. Yet notwithstanding if both these Kings should refuse, rather than his Holiness should go alone he would wait upon him as soon as he could be ready. Always provided that he might first see all differences of the Christian Princes amongst themselves fully laid down and appeased, as for his own part he was in none. And that he might have some good towns upon the coast in Italy put into his hands, for the retreat and safeguard of his men.'

With this answer Gasper Pons returned, nothing at all discontented.

And yet this declaration of the King (as superficial as it was) gave him that reputation abroad, as he was not long after elected by the Knights of the Rhodes⁷ protector of their order; all things multiplying to honour in a prince that had gotten such high estimation for his wisdom and sufficiency.*

There were these two last years some proceedings against heretics, which was rare in this King's reign, and rather by penances than by fire.⁸ The King had (though he were no good schoolman⁹) the honour to convert¹⁰ one of them by dispute at Canterbury.

This year also, though the King were no more haunted with sprites*, for that by the sprinkling partly of blood and partly of water¹¹ he had chased them away, yet nevertheless he had certain apparitions that troubled him, still shewing themselves from one region, which was the house of York. It came so to pass that the Earl of Suffolk, son to Elizabeth, eldest sister to King Edward the

⁶ Low vessels with one deck, propelled by sails and oars, common in the Mediterranean.

⁷ The order of St John.

⁸ Burning alive, a common punishment for heretics (especially in Spain).

⁹ Scholastic philosopher, versed in disputation.

¹⁰ To Christianity.

¹¹ Rituals to dispel ghosts.

Fourth by John Duke of Suffolk her second husband, and brother to John Earl of Lincoln, that was slain at Stokefield,¹² being of a hasty and choleric disposition, had killed a man in his fury. Whereupon the King gave him his pardon, but either willing to leave a cloud upon him or the better to make him feel his grace*, produced him openly¹³ to plead his pardon. This wrought* in the Earl, as in a haughty* stomach* it useth to do.¹⁴ For the ignominy printed deeper than the grace.* Wherefore, he being discontent, fled secretly into Flanders unto his aunt the Duchess of Burgundy. The King startled* at it. But being taught by troubles to use fair and timely remedies, wrought so with him by messages (the Lady Margaret also growing by often failing in her alchemy¹⁵ weary of her experiments, and partly being a little sweetened for that the King had not touched her name* in the confession of Perkin), that he came over again upon good terms, and was reconciled to the King.

[Marriage between Catherine of Aragon and Prince Arthur, 14 November 1501]

In the beginning of the next year, being the seventeenth of the King, the Lady Catherine, fourth daughter of Ferdinando and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, arrived in England at Plymouth the second of October, and was married to Prince Arthur in Paul's the fourteenth of November following; the Prince being then about fifteen years of age, and the lady about eighteen. The manner of her receiving, the manner of her entry into London, and the celebrity* of the marriage were performed with great and true magnificence, in regard of cost, shew, and order. The chief man that took the care was Bishop Fox, who was not only a grave counsellor for war or peace, but also a good surveyor of works¹ and a good master of ceremonies, and any thing else that was fit for the active part belonging to the service of court or state of a great King. This marriage was almost seven years in treaty, which was in part caused

¹² See above, p. 35.

¹³ Made him appear in public. Edmund Suffolk fled to Flanders in August 1499, but returned within a month.

¹⁴ Usually goes.

¹⁵ Attempt at transforming base metal into gold; here, training Warbeck.

¹ Manager of estates and buildings.

by the tender years of the marriage-couple, especially of the Prince. But the true reason was that these two Princes,² being Princes of great policy and profound judgement, stood a great time looking one upon another's fortunes, how they would go; knowing well that in the mean time the very treaty itself gave abroad in the world a reputation of a strait conjunction* and amity between them, which served on both sides to many purposes that their several* affairs required, and yet they continued still free. But in the end, when the fortunes of both the Princes did grow every day more and more prosperous and assured, and that looking all about them they saw no better conditions, they shut* it up.

The marriage-money the Princess brought (which was turned over to the King by act of renunciation) was two hundred thousand ducats, whereof one hundred thousand were payable ten days after the solemnization and the other hundred thousand at two payments annual; but part of it to be in jewels and plate, and a due course* set down to have them justly and indifferently* priced. The jointure* or advancement³ of the lady was the third part of the principality of Wales, and of the dukedom of Cornwall, and of the earldom of Chester, to be after* set forth in severalty.⁴ And in case she came to be Queen of England her advancement was left indefinite; but thus, that it should be as great as ever any former Queen of England had.

In all the devices and conceits⁵ of the triumphs of this marriage there was a great deal of astronomy, the lady being resembled* to Hesperus, and the Prince to Arcturus;⁶ and the old King Alphonsus⁷ (that was the greatest astronomer of Kings and was ancestor to the lady) was brought in to be the fortune-teller of the match. And whosoever had those toys* in compiling, they were not altogether pedantical.* But you may be sure that King Arthur the Briton, and the descent of the Lady Catherine from the house of Lancaster, was

² King Henry and King Ferdinand.

³ Gift of share in property, to be distributed at a later settlement.

⁴ Tenure of this land to be given to her absolutely.

⁵ Emblematic figures and designs.

⁶ Respectively, the evening star and the brightest star in the constellation Bootes.

⁷ Alfonso X, 'the Learned', King of Castile and Leon (1221-84), a great patron of scholars, best known for the 'Alfonsine Tables' produced by his astronomers at Toledo, the most accurate planetary tables till then.

in no wise forgotten. But as it should seem, it is not good to fetch fortunes from the stars. For this young Prince (that drew upon him at that time not only the hopes and affections of his country but the eyes and expectation of foreigners) after a few months, in the beginning of April, deceased at Ludlow Castle, where he was sent to keep his residence* and court as Prince of Wales.⁸ Of this Prince, in respect he died so young and by reason of his father's manner of education, that did cast no great lustre upon his children, there is little particular memory. Only thus much remaineth, that he was very studious and learned beyond his years and beyond the custom of great Princes.

There was a doubt ripped* up in the times following, when the divorce of King Henry the Eighth from the Lady Catherine did so much busy the world, whether Arthur was bedded⁹ with his lady or no, whereby that matter in fact (of carnal knowledge) might be made part of the case. And it is true that the lady herself denied it, or at least her counsel* stood upon it, and would not blanch* that advantage; although the plenitude of the Pope's power of dispensing¹⁰ was the main question. And this doubt was kept long open in respect of the two Queens that succeeded, Mary and Elizabeth,¹¹ whose legitimations were incompatible one with another, though their succession was settled by act of parliament. And the times that favoured Queen Mary's legitimation would have it believed that there was no carnal knowledge between Arthur and Catherine; not that they would seem to derogate from the Pope's absolute power to dispense even in that case, but only in point of honour and to make the case more favourable and smooth. And the times that favoured Queen Elizabeth's legitimation (which were the longer

⁸ Arthur died on 2 April 1502. The death of his son and heir, making the succession to the throne rest on the ten-year-old Henry, increased the King's insecurity and suspiciousness (Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, pp. 113–14; Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 91, 93, 216, 284–5).

⁹ Had physically consummated the marriage.

¹⁰ In June 1503 Henry was betrothed to Catherine, his brother's widow, a relationship forbidden by biblical law, and so needing the Pope's dispensation, issued in December 1503. The marriage only took place in June 1509 (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 294–7).

¹¹ Mary (b. 1516, reigned 1553–8) was the daughter of Henry's first marriage, to Catherine, while Elizabeth (b. 1533, reigned 1558–1603) was born to his second wife, Anne Boleyn.

and the later) maintained the contrary. So much there remaineth in memory, that it was half a year's time between the creation of Henry Prince of Wales and Prince Arthur's death; which was construed to be, for to expect a full time¹² whereby it might appear whether the Lady Catherine were with child by Prince Arthur or no. Again the lady herself procured a bull for the better corroboration of the marriage, with a clause of *vel forsam cognitam*¹³ which was not in the first bull. There was given in evidence also when the cause of the divorce was handled, a pleasant passage*, which was, that in a morning Prince Arthur upon his up-rising from bed with her called for drink, which he was not accustomed to do, and finding the gentleman of his chamber that brought him the drink to smile at it and to note* it, he said merrily to him that he had been in the midst of Spain, which was an hot region, and his journey had made him dry; and that if the other had been in so hot a clime he would have been drier than he. Besides the Prince was upon the point of sixteen years of age when he died, and forward*, and able in body.¹⁴

The February following, Henry Duke of York was created Prince of Wales, and Earl of Chester and Flint, for the dukedom of Cornwall devolved to him by statute. The King, also being fast-handed* and loth to part with a second dowry, but chiefly being affectionate* both by his nature and out of politic considerations to continue the alliance with Spain, prevailed with the Prince (though not without some reluctance* such as could be in those years, for he was not twelve years of age) to be contracted with the Princess Catherine, the secret providence of God ordaining that marriage to be the occasion of great events and changes.

¹² In order to await the full period of pregnancy (in fact, the interval was eleven months).

¹³ 'Even, perhaps, given carnal knowledge' (i.e., if the marriage had been consummated).

¹⁴ This whole paragraph was silently omitted by J. R. Lumby in his Pitt Press edition (Cambridge, 1892), observing Victorian propriety.

[Marriage between James IV of Scotland and
Margaret Tudor]

The same year were the espousals of James King of Scotland with the Lady Margaret the King's eldest daughter,¹ which was done by proxy and published at Paul's Cross the five and twentieth of January, and *Te Deum* solemnly sung. But certain it is that the joy of the City thereupon shewed, by ringing of bells and bonfires and such other incense of the people,² was more than could be expected in a case of so great and fresh enmity between the nations, especially in London, which was far enough off from feeling any of the former calamities of the war; and therefore might truly be attributed to a secret instinct and inspiring (which many times runneth not only in the hearts of Princes but in the pulse and veins of people) touching the happiness thereby to ensue in time to come.³ This marriage was in August following consummate at Edinburgh, the King bringing his daughter as far as Colliweston on the way, and then consigning her to the attendance of the Earl of Northumberland, who with a great troop of lords and ladies of honour brought her into Scotland to the King her husband.

This marriage had been in treaty* by the space of almost three years, from the time that the King of Scotland did first open his mind to Bishop Fox. The sum given in marriage by the King was ten thousand pounds; and the jointure* and advancement* assured by the King of Scotland was two thousand pounds a year after King James his death, and one thousand pounds a year in present for the lady's allowance or maintenance, this to be set* forth in lands, of the best and most certain revenue. During the treaty it is reported that the King remitted the matter to his council, and that some of the table in the freedom of counsellors (the King being present) did put the case⁴ that if God should take the King's two sons without issue, that then the kingdom of England would fall to the King of

¹ From this marriage descended James V of Scotland, father of Mary Queen of Scots, who was mother of King James I of England. The betrothal took place on 20 January 1502, the marriage on 8 August 1503, a year later than Bacon gives it.

² Joyous offerings, celebration by the populace.

³ The succession to James I and his son Prince Charles, to whom this *History* is dedicated.

⁴ Suggest the possibility.

Scotland, which might prejudice the monarchy of England. Whereunto the King himself replied that if that should be, Scotland would be but an accession to England, and not England to Scotland, for that the greater would draw the less; and that it was a safer union for England than that of France. This passed* as an oracle*, and silenced those that moved* the question.

The same year was fatal* as well for deaths as marriages, and that with equal temper.* For the joys and feasts of the two marriages were compensated* with the mournings and funerals of Prince Arthur (of whom we have spoken), and of Queen Elizabeth, who died in child-bed in the Tower, and the child lived not long after.⁵ There died also that year Sir Reginald Bray, who was noted to have had with the King the greatest freedom of any counsellor, but it was but a freedom the better to set off flattery;⁶ yet he bare more than his just part of envy for the exactions.

[King Henry's Fiscal Policies; Empson and Dudley]

At this time the King's estate was very prosperous: secured by the amity of Scotland; strengthened by that of Spain; cherished by that of Burgundy; all domestic troubles quenched; and all noise of war (like a thunder afar off) going¹ upon Italy. Wherefore nature,² which many times is happily contained* and refrained* by some bands* of fortune, began to take* place in the King, carrying as with a strong tide his affections* and thoughts unto the gathering and heaping up of treasure. And as Kings do more easily find instruments for their will* and humour* than for their service and honour, he had gotten for his purpose, or beyond his purpose two instruments, Empson³

⁵ She died on 11 February 1503, a year after her son Arthur.

⁶ That he might give his flattery more flavour. Bray was Henry's leading financial administrator, who acquired a great reputation and much property (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 109–10).

¹ Concentrating.

² Innate characteristics.

³ Sir Richard Empson was a lawyer, an MP, speaker in one of Henry's parliaments, and a loyal servant of the crown. From 1500 he and Dudley were the *judices fiscales* on the Council Learned in the Law, a Royal debt-collecting agency, whose affairs they prosecuted with such ferocity that they were both found guilty of treason and executed on 17 August 1510 (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 316–17).

and Dudley,⁴ whom the people esteemed as his horse-leeches* and shearers*: bold men and careless of fame,⁵ and that took toll of their master's grist.⁶

Dudley was of a good family, eloquent, and one that could put hateful business into good language. But Empson, that was the son of a sieve-maker, triumphed always upon the deed done,⁷ putting off all other respects* whatsoever. These two persons, being lawyers in science and privy councillors in authority (as the corruption of the best things is the worst), turned law and justice into worm-wood* and rapine.* For first their manner was to cause divers subjects to be indicted of sundry crimes, and so far forth to proceed in form of law, but when the bills were found⁸ then presently* to commit⁹ them; and nevertheless not to produce¹⁰ them in any reasonable time to their answer, but to suffer them to languish long in prison, and by sundry artificial devices and terrors* to extort from them great fines and ransoms, which they termed compositions* and mitigations.

Neither did they, towards the end, observe so much as the half-face* of justice in proceeding by indictment, but sent forth their precepts* to attach* men and convent¹¹ them before themselves and some others at their private houses, in a court of commission;¹² and there used to shuffle up* a summary proceeding by examination,¹³

⁴ Edmund Dudley, a lawyer by profession, an MP and speaker in one of Henry's parliaments, was president of the King's Council 1506-9. The full extent of the extortions he performed on the King's behalf was only revealed by the recent discovery of a document containing his 'Petition', a confession of eighty-four cases of unjust exactions, which he wrote in the Tower following his sentence to death for treason on 12 July 1509. During his imprisonment he also wrote *The Tree of Commonwealth*, a notable treatise on government, which criticized Henry's regime for interfering with justice by Privy Seal (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 311-13, 315-17).

⁵ Unconcerned at their reputation.

⁶ Made a percentage profit of the King's exactions.

⁷ Was satisfied so long as he got the thing done, no matter how.

⁸ When the grand jury found that there was a case to answer.

⁹ Imprison (instead of proceeding with the trial). Dudley's recently discovered Petition entirely validates Bacon's account of their proceedings.

¹⁰ Bring to court.

¹¹ Summon (for trial).

¹² As if they had been appointed special commissioners.

¹³ By summary cross-questioning (only).

without trial of jury, assuming to themselves there to deal both in pleas of the crown and controversies civil.¹⁴

Then did they also use to intral* and charge* the subjects' lands with tenures *in capite*,¹⁵ by finding false offices,¹⁶ and thereby to work* upon them for wardships,¹⁷ liveries,¹⁸ premier seisins¹⁹ and alienations²⁰ (being the fruits of those tenures); refusing (upon divers pretexts and delays) to admit men to traverse²¹ those false offices, according to the law.

Nay, the King's wards after they had accomplished* their full age could not be suffered to have livery of their lands without paying excessive fines, far exceeding all reasonable rates.

They did also vex men with information of intrusion,²² upon scarce colourable titles.²³

When men were outlawed²⁴ in personal actions²⁵ they would not permit them to purchase their charters of pardon except they paid great and intolerable sums, standing* upon the strict point of law, which upon outlawries giveth forfeiture of goods.²⁶ Nay contrary to all law and colour,²⁷ they maintained* the King ought to have the half of men's lands and rents during the space of full two years, for

¹⁴ Both criminal and civil cases.

¹⁵ The entitlements by which land or buildings are held, especially when not freehold; here, for land tenured immediately of the Crown.

¹⁶ False searches for the title to lands.

¹⁷ 'Guardianships over the estate of a minor involving payment to the guardian' (ed Weinberger).

¹⁸ 'Legal delivery of property into a person's possession; a writ allowing this' (SOED); for which a fee was exacted.

¹⁹ 'A feudal right of the English Crown to receive, from the heir of a tenant of the Crown [= *in capite*] who died in possession of a knight's fee, the profits of the inherited estate for the first year' (SOED).

²⁰ Actions transferring ownership of land or goods

²¹ Deny the validity of.

²² A proceeding to evict dwellers on land belonging to the King. (Empson and Dudley invented royal titles in order to force out the 'intruders', often people with a long-established and legitimate claim, who preferred to pay a fine rather than get involved in an expensive court case.)

²³ Hardly plausible evidence.

²⁴ Deprived of the benefits and protection of the law, having committed murder or treason.

²⁵ Legal proceedings against an individual.

²⁶ A person being declared an outlaw, his land and belongings are forfeit to the Crown.

²⁷ Apparent right or reason.

a pain* in case of outlawry. They would also ruffle* with jurors and inforce them to find* as they would direct, and (if they did not) convent them, imprison them, and fine them.

These and many other courses, fitter to be buried than repeated,²⁸ they had of preying upon the people; both like tame hawks for their master, and like wild hawks for themselves, insomuch as they grew to great riches and substance. But their principal working was upon penal laws, wherein they spared none great nor small; nor considered whether the law were possible or impossible, in use or obsolete, but raked over²⁹ all old and new statutes (though many of them were made with intention rather of terror than of rigour³⁰), ever having a rabble of promoters,³¹ questmongers,³² and leading³³ jurors at their command; so as they could have any thing found,³⁴ either for fact³⁵ or valuation.³⁶

There remaineth to this day a report that the King was on a time entertained by the Earl of Oxford (that was his principal servant both for war and peace) nobly and sumptuously, at his castle at Henningham.³⁷ And at the King's going away, the Earl's servants stood in a seemly* manner in their livery coats* with cognizances*, ranged on both sides and made the King a lane. The King called the Earl to him and said, 'My lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech.* These handsome gentlemen and yeomen which I see on both sides of me are (sure) your menial* servants.' The Earl smiled and said, 'It may please your Grace, that were not for mine ease.³⁸ They are most of them my retainers,³⁹ that are comen to do me service at such a time as this and chiefly to see your Grace.' The King started a little, and

²⁸ Hidden in oblivion, not reported

²⁹ Searched through.

³⁰ More to deter from crime than be rigorously enforced.

³¹ Professional informers and jurors

³² Those who made money by instigating legal cases; or, through conducting inquests, from which considerable profits could be made.

³³ Who would lead the other jury-members

³⁴ Bring about any judgement that they wished.

³⁵ As an action

³⁶ Financial gain.

³⁷ Castle Hedingham, Essex.

³⁸ Maintaining so many servants would be troublesome.

³⁹ Servants who render occasional service, but live at their own cost.

said, 'By my faith (my lord), I thank you for my good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws⁴⁰ broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.' And it is part of the report, that the Earl compounded* for no less than fifteen thousand marks.

And to shew further the King's extreme diligence* I do remember to have seen long since a book of account of Empson's,⁴¹ that had the King's hand* almost to every leaf by way of signing, and was in some places postilled* in the margent with the King's hand likewise, where was this remembrance:*

Item, Received, of such a one, five marks, for a pardon to be procured; and if the pardon do not pass,⁴² the money to be repaid; except the party be some other ways satisfied.

And over against this memorandum (of the King's own hand):

Otherwise satisfied.

Which I do the rather mention because it shews in the King a nearness*, but yet with a kind of justness.* So these little sands and grains of gold and silver (as it seemeth) holp* not a little to make up the great heap and bank.

[Treachery of Edmund, Earl of Suffolk]

But meanwhile to keep the King awake, the Earl of Suffolk, having been too gay* at Prince Arthur's marriage, and sunk himself deep in debt, had yet once more a mind to be a knight-errant and to seek adventures in foreign parts; and taking his brother with him fled again into Flanders.¹ That no doubt which gave him confidence was the great murmur* of the people against the King's government. And being a man of a light and rash spirit, he thought every vapour* would be a tempest. Neither wanted he some party within the king-

⁴⁰ See p. 53 above, for the King's forbidding large numbers of retainers dressed in their master's uniform as threatening royal authority.

⁴¹ 'Dudley's account book of sums received by him, presumably mainly as a member of the Council Learned, for the use of the King, from 9 September 1504 to 28 May 1508, survives in B.M. Lansdowne MS. 127. The entries for each day are initialled by Henry VII himself' (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 133 n., 190-1).

⁴² Be not issued.

¹ In July or August 1501 Suffolk fled, together with his brother Richard, to the court of Maximilian, asking his aid in starting a Yorkist conspiracy for the crown (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 92-3).

dom. For the murmur of people awakes the discontents* of nobles, and again that calleth up commonly some head* of sedition. The King resorting to his wonted and tried arts, caused Sir Robert Curson, captain of the castle at Hammes² (being at that time beyond sea, and therefore less likely to be wrought upon by the King), to fly from his charge and to feign himself a servant of the Earl's. This knight having insinuated himself into the secrets of the Earl, and finding by him upon whom chiefly he had either hope or hold*, advertised the King thereof in great secrecy; but nevertheless maintained his own credit and inward trust with the Earl. Upon whose advertisements,³ the King attached* William Courtney Earl of Devonshire, his brother-in-law,⁴ married to the Lady Katherine, daughter to King Edward the Fourth; William de la Pole, brother to the Earl of Suffolk; Sir James Tyrell and Sir John Windham, and some other meaner persons, and committed them to custody. George Lord Abergavenny and Sir Thomas Green were at the same time apprehended, but as upon less suspicion so in a freer restraint, and were soon after delivered. The Earl of Devonshire being interested⁵ in the blood of York (that was rather feared than nocent*), yet as one that might be the object of others' plots and designs, remained prisoner in the Tower during the King's life. William de la Pole was also long restrained*, though not so straitly.* But for Sir James Tyrell (against whom the blood of the innocent Princes,⁶ Edward the Fifth and his brother, did still cry from under the altar⁷), and Sir John Windham, and the other meaner ones, they were attainted and executed, the two knights beheaded.⁸

Nevertheless, to confirm the credit⁹ of Curson (who belike had not yet done all his feats of activity), there was published at Paul's Cross about the time of the said executions the Pope's bull of

² Near Calais.

³ Curson's information.

⁴ In fact, Henry's wife's brother-in-law (Spedding, *S*, vi.221).

⁵ Related (through his marriage).

⁶ Murdered in the Tower.

⁷ Cf. Rev. 6: 9-10: 'I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"'

⁸ These executions took place in May 1502.

⁹ The Pope's excommunication guaranteed the accuracy of Henry's spies.

excommunication and curse against the Earl of Suffolk and Sir Robert Curson, and some others by name, and likewise in general against all the abettors of the said Earl; wherein it must be confessed that heaven was made too much to bow to earth, and religion to policy.¹⁰ But soon after, Curson when he saw time returned into England, and withal into wonted favour with the King, but worse fame with the people. Upon whose return the Earl was much dismayed, and seeing himself destitute of hopes (the Lady Margaret also by tract* of time and bad success being now become cool in those attempts), after some wandering in France and Germany, and certain little projects* (no better than squibs*) of an exiled man, being tired out, retired again into the protection of the Archduke Philip in Flanders, who by the death of Isabella was at that time King of Castile, in the right of Joan his wife.

[Parliament and Law-giving, 1504]

This year, being the nineteenth of his reign, the King called his parliament,¹ wherein a man may easily guess how absolute* the King took himself to be with his parliament, when Dudley, that was so hateful, was made Speaker of the House of Commons. In this parliament there were not made many statutes memorable touching public government, but those that were had still the stamp of the King's wisdom and policy.

There was a statute made for the disannulling of all patents of lease or grant to such as came not upon lawful summons to serve the King in his wars against the enemies or rebels,² or that should depart without the King's licence, with an exception of certain persons of the long-robe*; providing nevertheless that they should have the King's wages from their house³ till their return home again. There had been the like made before for offices*, and by this statute it was extended to lands. But a man may easily see by many statutes made in this King's time that the King thought it safest to assist martial law by law of parliament.

¹⁰ Political manoeuvring, 'reason of state'.

¹ Henry's seventh and last parliament met from 25 January to 30 March 1504.

² Cancelling the rights to lease or own land if those who owned them did not bear arms.

³ From the day of leaving their house.

Another statute was made prohibiting the bringing in of manufactures of silk wrought by itself or mixt with any other thrid.* But it was not of stuffs of whole-piece⁴ (for* that the realm had of them no manufacture in use at that time), but of knit* silk or texture* of silk; as ribbands*, laces, cauls*, points*, and girdles*, etc., which the people of England could then well skill* to make. This law pointed at a true principle, that where foreign materials are but superfluities*, foreign manufactures should be prohibited, for that will either banish the superfluity or gain* the manufacture.

There was a law also of resumption⁵ of patents of gaols, and the reannexing of them to the sheriffwicks;⁶ privileged officers being no less an interruption* of justice than privileged places.

There was likewise a law to restrain the by-laws or ordinances of corporations,⁷ which many times were against the prerogative of the King, the common law of the realm, and the liberty of the subject, being fraternities⁸ in evil. It was therefore provided that they should not be put in execution without the allowance* of the chancellor, treasurer, and the two chief justices, or three⁹ of them; or of the two justices of circuit¹⁰ where the corporation was.

Another law was in effect to bring in the silver of the realm to the mint, in making all clipped minished or impaired coins of silver not to be current in payments, without giving any remedy of weight;¹¹ but with an exception only of reasonable wearing (which was as nothing, in respect of the incertainty¹²), and so upon the matter* to set the mint on work, and to give way to new coins of silver which should be then minted.

⁴ Whole cloth (of the full size as manufactured)

⁵ Action by the Crown to reassume possession of rights which had been bestowed on others – here, the licence to administer prisons, which was now reassigned to sheriffs as official law-enforcers.

⁶ The area over which the authority of a sheriff extended

⁷ City of London companies, or trade-guilds.

⁸ These corporations.

⁹ Any three of the most senior legal officers mentioned.

¹⁰ Legal itinerary (into which the English provinces were divided).

¹¹ Citizens should bring their 'minished' or 'clipped' coins (the edges having been shaven off to be melted down and re-used) to the Royal Mint to be converted into plate or bullion at their actual weight, not face value.

¹² It being hard to ascertain whether the 'diminution' was due to normal wear and tear, or to fraud, no concessions were made.

There likewise was a long statute against vagabonds, wherein two things may be noted: the one, the dislike the parliament had of gaoling* of them, as that which was chargeable*, pesterous*, and of no open example.¹³ The other, that in the statutes of this King's time (for this of the nineteenth year is not the only statute of that kind) there are ever coupled the punishment of vagabonds and the forbidding of dice and cards and unlawful games unto servants and mean people, and the putting down and suppressing of alehouses; as strings* of one root together, and as if the one were unprofitable without the other.¹⁴

As for riots and retainers,¹⁵ there passed scarce any parliament in this time without a law against them: the King ever having an eye to might and multitude.¹⁶

There was granted also that parliament a subsidy,¹⁷ both from the temporality* and the clergy. And yet nevertheless ere the year expired there went out commissions for a general benevolence, though there were no wars, no fears. The same year the City gave five thousand marks for confirmation of their liberties,¹⁸ a thing fitter for the beginnings of kings' reigns than the latter ends. Neither was it a small matter that the mint gained upon the late statute, by the recoinage of groats and half-groats, now twelve-pences and six-pences.¹⁹ As for Empson and Dudley's mills, they did grind more than ever. So that it was a strange thing to see what golden showers poured down upon the King's treasury at once:²⁰ the last payments of the marriage-money from Spain; the subsidy; the Benevolence; the recoinage; the redemption of the city's liberties; the casualties.²¹ And this is the more to be marvelled at because

¹³ Deterrent effect.

¹⁴ As if forbidding games would be ineffective without also closing alehouses

¹⁵ See above, pp. 53, 178.

¹⁶ Unauthorized political power, and mobs

¹⁷ Payment to the King, who at this time was demanding his customary feudal aids for the knighting of his son Arthur (but this took place in 1489, and the prince had been dead for nearly two years), and the marriage of his daughter Margaret to James IV in the previous year—parliament gave less than he had demanded, the first sign of opposition to his financial policies (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 200–1).

¹⁸ Guaranteed boundaries within which the corporation had jurisdiction.

¹⁹ Silver coins worth fourpence and twopence were recoinced at three times their face value

²⁰ At the same time.

²¹ Subsidies for other contingencies

the King had then no occasions at all of wars or troubles. He had now but one son, and one daughter unbestowed.* He was wise. He was of an high* mind. He needed not to make riches his glory, he did excel in so many things else, save that certainly avarice doth ever find in itself matter of ambition.* Belike* he thought to leave his son such a kingdom and such a mass of treasure, as he might choose his greatness where he would.

This year was also kept the Serjeants' feast,²² which was the second call in this King's days.

[The Death of Queen Isabella, 1504]

About this time¹ Isabella Queen of Castile deceased, a right noble lady and an honour to her sex and times, and the corner-stone of the greatness of Spain that hath followed. This accident* the King took not for news at large,² but thought it had a great relation to his own affairs, especially in two points: the one for example, the other for consequence. First, he conceived that the case of Ferdinando of Aragon after the death of Queen Isabella was his own case after the death of his own Queen; and the case of Joan the heir unto Castile was the case of his own son Prince Henry. For if both of the Kings had* their kingdoms in the right of their wives, they descended to the heirs and did not accrue to the husbands. And although his own case had both steel and parchment³ more than the other,⁴ that is to say, a conquest⁵ in the field and an act of parliament; yet notwithstanding, that natural title⁶ of descent in blood did (in the imagination even of a wise man) breed a doubt that the other two were not safe nor sufficient. Wherefore he was wonderful diligent to inquire and observe what became of the King of Aragon in holding and continuing the kingdom of Castile, and whether he did hold it in his own right or as administrator to his daughter, and whether he were like to hold it in fact or to be put out by his son-in-law.

²² As in 1495: see p. 119.

¹ 26 November 1504.

² No piece of ordinary news.

³ Both military and legal justification.

⁴ The case of Ferdinand.

⁵ At Bosworth.

⁶ Which belonged to this Queen.

Secondly, he did revolve in his mind that the state of Christendom might by this late accident have a turn*. For whereas before* time himself with the conjunction of Aragon and Castile (which then was one), and the amity of Maximilian and Philip his son the Archduke, was far too strong a party for France; he began to fear that now the French King (who had great interest in the affections of Philip, the young King of Castile), and Philip himself now King of Castile (who was in ill terms with his father-in-law about the present government of Castile), and thirdly Maximilian, Philip's father (who was ever variable, and upon whom the surest aim that could be taken was that he would not be long as he had been last before), would all three, being potent Princes, enter into some strait league and confederation amongst themselves, whereby though he should not be endangered yet he should be left to the poor amity of Aragon;⁷ and whereas he had been heretofore a kind of arbiter of Europe, he should now go less,⁸ and be over-topped by so great a conjunction.

[King Henry's Marital Plans]

He had also (as it seems) an inclination to marry, and bethought himself of some fit conditions¹ abroad. And amongst others he had heard of the beauty and virtuous behaviour of the young Queen of Naples,² the widow of Ferdinando the younger, being then of matronal* years of seven and twenty; by whose marriage he thought that the kingdom of Naples, having been a goal* for a time between the King of Aragon and the French King, and being but newly settled might in some part be deposited in his hands, who was so able to keep the stakes.³ Therefore he sent in ambassage or message three confident* persons, Francis Marsin, James Braybrooke, and John Stile, upon two several* inquisitions*, rather than negotiations, the one touching the person and condition* of the young Queen of Naples, the other touching all particulars of estate that concerned the fortunes and intentions of Ferdinando. And because

⁷ Since Ferdinand would have lost Castile.

⁸ Have less importance.

¹ Women suitably qualified for marriage.

² Joan, widow of Ferdinand II of Naples, and niece of Ferdinand of Aragon.

³ Act as umpire (holding the prize-money).

they may observe best who themselves are observed least, he sent them under colourable* pretexts, giving them letters of kindness and compliment from Catherine the Princess to her aunt and niece, the old and young Queen of Naples, and delivering to them also a book of new articles of peace; which, notwithstanding it had been delivered unto Doctor de Puebla, the lieger* ambassador of Spain here in England, to be sent, yet for that the King had been long without hearing from Spain he thought good those messengers, when they had been with the two Queens, should likewise pass on to the court of Ferdinando and take a copy of the book with them.

The instructions touching the Queen of Naples were so curious* and exquisite*, being as articles whereby to direct a survey or framing* a particular* of her person*, for complexion, favour*, feature,⁴ stature, health, age, customs, behaviour, conditions, and estate; as, if the King had been young, a man would have judged him to be amorous, but being ancient⁵ it ought to be interpreted that sure he was very chaste, for that he meant to find all things in one woman and so to settle his affections without ranging.* But in this match he was soon cooled when he heard from his ambassadors that this young Queen had had a goodly jointure in the realm of Naples, well answered⁶ during the time of her uncle Frederick, yea and during the time of Lewis the French King, in whose division her revenue fell;⁷ but since the time that the kingdom was in Ferdinando's hands all was assigned to the army and garrisons there, and she received only a pension or exhibition* out of his coffers.

The other part of the inquiry had a grave and diligent return*, informing the King at full of the present state of King Ferdinando. By this report it appeared to the King that Ferdinando did continue the government of Castile as administrator unto his daughter Joan, by the title* of Queen Isabella's will, and partly by the custom of the kingdom (as he pretended); and that all mandates* and grants were expedited* in the name of Joan his daughter and himself as

⁴ Figure or build. Spedding quotes from the ambassadors' report (Cotton MSS), made in the summer of 1505, that they were unable to give a detailed account of the Queen's body, because she was 'so covered with her mantle that they could only see her visage' (S, VI.227).

⁵ He was then aged forty-seven.

⁶ Of a money payment: securely guaranteed.

⁷ 'Into whose coffers flowed the revenue of the Kingdom of Naples' (ed. Gabrieli).

administrator, without mention of Philip her husband. And that King Ferdinando, howsoever he did dismiss* himself of the name of King of Castile, yet meant to hold the kingdom without account and in absolute command.

It appeareth also that he flattered himself with hopes that King Philip would permit unto him the government of Castile during his life; which he had laid his plot to work* him unto, both by some counsellors of his about him which Ferdinando had at his devotion*, and chiefly by promise that in case Philip gave not way unto it he would marry some young lady, whereby to put him by⁸ the succession of Aragon and Granada, in case he⁹ should have a son; and lastly by representing unto him that the government of the Burgundians, till Philip were by continuance* in Spain made as natural* of Spain, would not be endured by the Spaniards. But in all those things, though wisely laid down and considered, Ferdinando failed; but that Pluto was better to him than Pallas.¹⁰

In the same report also the ambassadors, being mean men¹¹ and therefore the more free, did strike upon a string which was somewhat dangerous; for they declared plainly that the people of Spain, both nobles and commons, were better affected unto the part of Philip (so* he brought his wife with him) than to Ferdinando; and expressed the reason to be because he¹² had imposed upon them many taxes and tallages*, which was the King's own case between him and his son.¹³

There was also in this report a declaration of an overture* of marriage which Amason the secretary of Ferdinando had made unto the ambassadors in great secret, between Charles Prince of Castile¹⁴ and Mary the King's second daughter; assuring the King that the treaty of marriage then on foot for the said Prince and the daughter of France would break, and that she the said daughter of France

⁸ Exclude Philip from.

⁹ Ferdinando.

¹⁰ 'Except that Philip's death provided what craft could not' (ed. Weinberger).

¹¹ Of middle rank.

¹² Ferdinand.

¹³ Likewise King Henry's popularity was lower than that of his son, Prince Henry, because of his excessive taxations.

¹⁴ Afterwards the famous emperor Charles V. A treaty for this marriage was arranged in 1507, but it never took place.

should be married to Angoulême,¹⁵ that was the heir apparent of France.

There was a touch* also of a speech of marriage between Ferdinando and Madame de Foix, a lady of the blood of France, which afterwards indeed succeeded.¹⁶ But this was reported as learnt in France, and silenced* in Spain.

The King by the return of this ambassage, which gave great light unto his affairs, was well instructed and prepared how to carry himself between Ferdinando King of Aragon and Philip his son-in-law, King of Castile, resolving with himself to do all that in him lay to keep them at one within themselves, but howsoever that succeeded, by a moderate carriage* and bearing the person* of a common friend to lose neither of their friendships; but yet to run a course more entire¹⁷ with the King of Aragon, but more laboured and officious¹⁸ with the King of Castile. But he was much taken with the overture of marriage with his daughter Mary, both because it was the greatest marriage of Christendom and for that it took hold of both allies.

But to corroborate* his alliance with Philip, the winds gave him an interview.¹⁹ For Philip, choosing the winter season the better to surprise the King of Aragon, set forth with a great navy out of Flanders for Spain in the month of January, the one and twentieth year of the King's reign. But himself was surprised with a cruel tempest, that scattered his ships upon the several coasts of England; and the ship wherein the King and Queen were, with two other small barks only, torn and in great peril, to escape the fury of the weather thrust into Weymouth. King Philip himself, having not been used as it seems to sea, all wearied and extreme sick, would needs land to refresh his spirits;²⁰ though it was against the opinion of his council, doubting it might breed delay, his occasions* requiring celerity.

¹⁵ Francis of Angoulême, subsequently King Francis I of France.

¹⁶ This took place on 18 March 1506.

¹⁷ Open, honest (towards Ferdinand).

¹⁸ Calculated, formal (towards Philip).

¹⁹ Provided the occasion for a personal meeting.

²⁰ He landed at Melcombe Regis on 12 January 1506.

[Meeting of Henry and Philip of Castile at Windsor,
1506]

The rumour of the arrival of a puissant navy upon the coast made the country arm. And Sir Thomas Trenchard, with forces suddenly raised, not knowing what the matter might be came to Weymouth; where, understanding the accident*, he did in all humbleness and humanity invite the King and Queen to his house, and forthwith dispatched posts* to the court. Soon after came Sir John Caroe likewise with a great troop of men well armed, using the like humbleness and respects towards the King when he knew the case. King Philip doubting that they, being but subjects, durst not let him pass away again without the King's notice and leave, yielded to their intreaties to stay till they heard from the court. The King, as soon as he heard the news commanded presently the Earl of Arundel to go to visit the King of Castile, and to let him understand that as he was very sorry for his mishap, so he was glad that he had escaped the danger of the seas, and likewise of the occasion himself had to do him honour; and desiring him to think himself as in his own land, and that the King made all haste possible to come and embrace him.

The Earl came to him in great magnificence with a brave troop of three hundred horse; and for more state* came by torch-light. After he had done the King's message, King Philip seeing how the world went,¹ the sooner to get away went upon speed* to the King at Windsor, and his Queen followed by easy journeys. The two Kings at their meeting used all the caresses and loving demonstrations that were possible. And the King of Castile said pleasantly* to the King that he was now punished for that he would not come within his walled town of Calais, when they met last.² But the King answered that walls and seas were nothing where hearts were open, and that he³ was here no otherwise but to be served.

After a day or two's refreshing the Kings entered into speech of renewing the treaty, the King saying that though King Philip's person were the same, yet his fortunes and state were raised,⁴ in

¹ How things were.

² See pp. 163-4.

³ Philip.

⁴ Increased (by his accession to the Kingdom of Castile).

which case a renovation* of treaty was used* amongst Princes. But while these things were in handling* the King, choosing a fit time, and drawing the King of Castile into a room where they two only were private, and laying his hand civilly upon his arm, and changing his countenance a little from a countenance of entertainment,⁵ said to him, 'Sir, you have been saved upon my coast, I hope you will not suffer me to wreck upon yours.' The King of Castile asked him what he meant by that speech? 'I mean it' (saith the King) 'by that same harebrain* wild fellow my subject the Earl of Suffolk, who is protected in your country, and begins to play the fool when all others are weary of it.' The King of Castile answered, 'I had thought, Sir, your felicity had been above those thoughts. But if it trouble you I will banish him.' The King replied, those hornets were best in their nest, and worst then when they did fly abroad; and that his desire was to have him⁶ delivered to him. The King of Castile herewith a little confused, and in a study,⁷ said, 'That can I not do with my honour, and less with yours; for you will be thought to have used me as a prisoner.'⁸ The King presently said, 'Then the matter is at an end. For I will take that dishonour upon me, and so your honour is saved.'

The King of Castile (who had the King in great estimation, and besides remembered where he was, and knew not what use he might have of the King's amity, for that himself was new in his state of Spain, and unsettled both with his father-in-law and with his people) composing his countenance said, 'Sir, you give law to me; but so will I to you. You shall have him, but upon your honour you shall not take his life.'⁹ The King embracing him said, 'Agreed.' Saith the King of Castile, 'Neither shall it dislike you if I send to him in such a fashion as he may partly come with his own good will.' The King said it was well thought of; and if it pleased him he would join with him in sending to the Earl a message to that purpose. They both sent severally*; and meanwhile they continued feasting and pastimes, the King being on his part willing to have the Earl sure* before the King of Castile went, and the King of

⁵ Adopting a more serious expression.

⁶ Suffolk.

⁷ Perplexed.

⁸ Bacon took this point from Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, 7.2.

⁹ Henry VII kept his word, but his son (Henry VIII) put Suffolk to death in 1513.

Castile being as willing to seem to be enforced.¹⁰ The King also with many wise and excellent persuasions did advise the King of Castile to be ruled by the counsel of his father-in-law Ferdinando, a Prince so prudent, so experienced, so fortunate. The King of Castile (who was in no very good terms with his said father-in-law) answered, that if his father-in-law would suffer him to govern his kingdoms, he should govern him.¹¹

There were immediately messengers sent from both Kings to recall the Earl of Suffolk; who upon gentle words used to him was soon charmed,¹² and willing enough to return, assured of his life, and hoping of his liberty. He was brought through Flanders to Calais, and thence landed at Dover, and with sufficient guard delivered and received at the Tower of London.¹³ Meanwhile King Henry to draw out the time, continued his feastings and entertainments, and after he had received the King of Castile into the fraternity of the Garter, and for a reciprocal* had his son the Prince admitted to the order of the Golden Fleece,¹⁴ he accompanied King Philip and his Queen to the City of London, where they were entertained with the greatest magnificence and triumph that could be upon no greater warning.* And as soon as the Earl of Suffolk had been conveyed to the Tower (which was the serious part) the jollities had an end, and the Kings took leave. Nevertheless during their being here they in substance concluded that treaty which the Flemings term *intercursus malus*, and bears date at Windsor, for that there be some things in it more to the advantage of the English than of them; especially for that the free fishing of the Dutch upon the coasts and seas of England, granted in the treaty of *undecimo*,¹⁵ was not by this treaty confirmed, all articles that confirm former treaties being precisely and warily limited and confined to matter of commerce only, and not otherwise.

¹⁰ Forced (by Henry) to send for Suffolk.

¹¹ If Ferdinand would let him govern his Kingdom of Castile, he (Philip) would let himself be ruled in all other matters.

¹² Won over, as if by magic power.

¹³ On 24 April 1506.

¹⁴ An order instituted by the Duke of Burgundy in 1429, whose Grand Master was now the King of Spain, also Duke of Burgundy.

¹⁵ The *intercursus magnus* (above, pp. 133-4) granted in 1496, the eleventh year of the King's reign. This second treaty was signed on 30 April 1506, but never became effective in the Netherlands.

[Anglo-Burgundian Treaty, 1506]

It was observed that the great tempest which drove Philip into England blew down the golden eagle from the spire of Paul's, and in the fall it fell upon a sign of the black eagle which was in Paul's church-yard, in the place where the school-house¹ now standeth, and battered it and broke it down; which was a strange stooping* of a hawk upon a fowl. This the people interpreted to be an ominous prognostic upon the imperial house; which was by interpretation also fulfilled upon Philip the Emperor's son, not only in the present disaster of the tempest but in that that followed. For Philip arriving into Spain and attaining the possession of the kingdom of Castile without resistance (insomuch as Ferdinando, who had spoke so great before, was with difficulty admitted to the speech of his son-in-law), sickened soon after, and deceased; yet after such time as there was an observation by the wisest of that court that if he had lived his father would have gained upon him in that sort² as he would have governed his counsels and designs, if not his affections. By this³ all Spain returned into the power of Ferdinando in state as it was before; the rather in regard of the infirmity of Joan his daughter, who loving her husband (by whom she had many children) dearly well, and no less beloved of him (howsoever her father, to make Philip ill-beloved of the people of Spain, gave out that Philip used her not well), was unable in strength of mind to bear the grief of his decease and fell distracted* of her wits; of which malady her father was thought no ways to endeavour the cure, the better to hold his regal power in Castile. So that as the felicity of Charles the Eighth was said to be a dream,⁴ so the adversity of Ferdinando was said likewise to be a dream, it passed over so soon.

About this time the King was desirous to bring into the house of Lancaster celestial⁵ honour, and became suitor to Pope Julius to canonize King Henry the Sixth for a saint, the rather in respect of

¹ St Paul's school, founded by Dean Colet in 1512, at that time located in the cathedral precincts.

² Dominated him to such a degree.

³ Philip's death, on 25 September 1506.

⁴ Conquering Naples, only to lose it.

⁵ Divine, belonging to a saint.

that his famous prediction⁶ of the King's own assumption to the crown. Julius referred the matter (as the manner is) to certain cardinals to take the verification of his holy acts and miracles, but it died under the reference.⁷ The general opinion was that Pope Julius was too dear,⁸ and that the King would not come to his rates.* But it is more probable that that Pope, who was extremely jealous of the dignity of the see of Rome and of the acts thereof, knowing that King Henry the Sixth was reputed in the world abroad but for a simple* man, was afraid it would but diminish the estimation of that kind of honour if there were not a distance* kept between innocents* and saints.

[King Henry's Marital Plans, and Final Illness]

The same year likewise there proceeded a treaty of marriage between the King and the Lady Margaret, Duchess Dowager of Savoy, only daughter to Maximilian and sister to the King of Castile; a lady wise and of great good fame. This matter had been in speech between the two Kings at their meeting,¹ but was soon after resumed; and therein was employed for his first piece* the King's then chaplain, and after the great prelate, Thomas Wolsey.² It was in the end concluded with great and ample conditions for the King, but with promise *de futuro*³ only. It may be the King was the rather induced⁴ unto it for that he had heard more and more of the marriage to go* on between his great friend and ally Ferdinando of Aragon and Madame de Foix, whereby that King began to piece* with the French King, from whom he had been always before severed. So fatal* a thing it is for the greatest and straitest* amities of Kings at one time or other to have a little of the wheel.⁵ Nay there

⁶ As recorded by Hall's *Chronicle*, Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI*, 4.6.68–74 ('this pretty lad will prove our country's bliss . . . / His head by nature framed to wear a crown'), and by Bacon below (p. 204).

⁷ Failed when scrutinized.

⁸ Would expect too large a gift for the canonization.

¹ On 20 March 1506, ratified by Henry on 15 May 1506.

² Subsequently Archbishop of York under King Henry VIII, and executed by him in 1530.

³ A marriage to be made definite at some future date. But Margaret refused him (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 290–2).

⁴ Influenced by external circumstances.

⁵ Divergence, irregularity.

is a further tradition (in Spain though not with us) that the King of Aragon (after he knew that the marriage between Charles the young Prince of Castile and Mary the King's second daughter went roundly* on, which though it was first moved by the King of Aragon, yet it was afterwards wholly advanced and brought to perfection by Maximilian and the friends on that side), entered into a jealousy that the King did aspire to the government of Castilia, as administrator during the minority of his son-in-law, as if there should have been a competition of three for that government: Ferdinando grandfather on the mother's side, Maximilian grandfather on the father's side, and King Henry father-in-law to the young Prince.

Certainly it is not unlike but the King's government (carrying the young Prince with him) would have been perhaps more welcome to the Spaniards than that of the other two. For the nobility of Castilia, that so lately put out the King of Aragon in favour of King Philip, and had discovered themselves so far,⁶ could not be but in a secret distrust and distaste of that King. And as for Maximilian, upon twenty respects⁷ he could not have been the man. But this purpose of the King's seemeth to me (considering the King's safe courses*, never found to be enterprising* or adventurous) not greatly probable, except he should have had a desire to breathe warmer, because he had ill⁸ lungs.

This marriage with Margaret was protracted* from time to time in respect of the infirmity⁹ of the King, who now in the two and twentieth of his reign began to be troubled with the gout. But the defluxion* taking* also into his breast wasted his lungs, so that thrice in a year in a kind of return, and especially in the spring, he had great fits and labours of the tissick.* Nevertheless he continued to intend* business with as great diligence as before in his health, yet so, as upon this warning he did likewise now more seriously think of the world to come, and of making himself a saint, as well as King Henry the Sixth, by treasure better employed than to be given to Pope Julius. For this year he gave greater alms than accustomed, and discharged

⁶ Revealed their attitude so completely.

⁷ In any way.

⁸ Weak, diseased

⁹ Phthisis.

all prisoners about the City that lay¹⁰ for fees, or debts under forty shillings. He did also make haste with¹¹ religious foundations and in the year following, which was the three and twentieth, finished that of the Savoy.¹² And hearing also of the bitter cries of his people against the oppressions of Dudley and Empson and their complices, partly by devout persons about him and partly by public sermons (the preachers doing their duty therein), he was touched with great remorse for the same.¹³

Nevertheless Empson and Dudley, though they could not but hear of these scruples in the King's conscience, yet as if the King's soul and his money were in several* offices, that the one was not to intermeddle with the other, went on with as great rage* as ever. For the same three and twentieth year was there a sharp prosecution against Sir William Capel (now the second time), and this was for matters of misgovernment¹⁴ in his mayoralty; the great matter being that in some payments he had taken knowledge of false moneys, and did not his diligence¹⁵ to examine and beat* it out who were the offenders. For this and some other things laid to his charge he was condemned to pay two thousand pounds, and being a man of stomach* and hardened by his former troubles, refused to pay a mite; and belike used some untoward* speeches of the proceedings, for which he was sent to the Tower, and there remained till the King's death. Knesworth likewise, that had been lately Mayor of London, and both his Sheriffs, were for abuses in their offices questioned and imprisoned, and delivered upon one thousand four hundred pounds paid. Hawis, an Alderman of London, was put in trouble,¹⁶ and died with thought* and anguish before his business came to an end. Sir Laurence Ailmer, who had likewise been Mayor of London, and his two Sheriffs, were put to the fine of one

¹⁰ Were imprisoned.

¹¹ Hurry to have the buildings completed.

¹² Henry VII built the Savoy hospital and almshouse to succour a hundred poor people.

¹³ The chief evidence for Henry's remorse comes from his will, which set up a committee to investigate 'the circumstances if any person of what degree so ever he be, show any complaint to our executors any wrong to have been done to him, by us, by our commandment, occasion or mean, or that we held any goods or lands which of right ought to appertain to him' (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 313).

¹⁴ The Latin translation describes this accusation (made in 1507) as 'pretended'.

¹⁵ The attention and care required by his office.

¹⁶ Difficulties with the authorities.

thousand pounds. And Sir Laurence for refusing to make payment was committed to prison, where he stayed till Empson himself was committed in his place.¹⁷

It is no marvel (if the faults were so light and the rates* so heavy) that the King's treasure of store that he left at his death, most of it in secret places under his own key and keeping at Richmond, amounted (as by tradition it is reported to have done) unto the sum of near eighteen hundred thousand pounds sterling; a huge mass of money even for these times.¹⁸

[Marriage Treaty between Mary Tudor and Charles of Castile, 1508]

The last act of state that concluded this King's temporal felicity was the conclusion of a glorious match between his daughter Mary and Charles Prince of Castile, afterwards the great Emperor, both being of tender years; which treaty was perfected¹ by Bishop Fox and other his commissioners at Calais, the year before the King's death. In which alliance it seemeth he himself took so high contentment, as in a letter which he wrote thereupon to the City of London commanding all possible demonstrations of joy to be made for the same, he expresseth himself as if he thought he had built a wall of brass about his kingdom,² when he had for his sons-in-law a King of Scotland and a Prince of Castile and Burgundy. So as now there was nothing to be added to this great King's felicity, being at the top of all worldly bliss, in regard of the high marriages of his children, his great renown throughout Europe, and his scarce credible riches, and the perpetual constancy of his prosperous successes, but an opportune death, to withdraw him from any future blow of fortune; which certainly (in regard of the great hatred of his people and the title of his son, being then come to eighteen years of age,

¹⁷ After the accession of King Henry VIII. Bills for the attainder of Empson and Dudley were issued in March 1510.

¹⁸ Modern historians estimate that Henry VII left about £226,000 (Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 217-18).

¹ The treaty was concluded on 21 December 1507, ratified by Margaret in October 1508; but the marriage never took place.

² A device attributed to magicians offering to protect England, such as Greene's Friar Bacon, or Merlin, as described by Spenser and Drayton (Anderson, *Biographical Truth*, pp. 181-2, 235 n. 31).

and being a bold Prince and liberal*, and that gained upon³ the people by his very aspect and presence⁴) had not been impossible to have comen upon him.

To crown also the last year of his reign as well as his first, he did an act of piety, rare and worthy to be taken in imitation. For he granted forth a general pardon,⁵ as expecting a second coronation in a better kingdom. He did also declare in his will, that his mind was, that restitution* should be made of those sums which had been unjustly taken by his officers.

And thus this Salomon of England (for Salomon also was too heavy upon his people in exactions) having lived two and fifty years, and thereof reigned three and twenty years and eight months, being in perfect memory and in a most blessed mind, in a great calm of a consuming sickness, passed to a better world, the two and twentieth of April 1508,⁶ at his palace of Richmond which himself had built.

[King Henry's Character]

This King (to speak of him in terms equal to his deserving) was one of the best sort of wonders, a wonder for wise men. He had parts (both in his virtues and his fortune¹) not so fit for a commonplace as for observation.² Certainly he was religious, both in his affection and observance. But as he could see clear (for those times) through superstition, so he would be blinded now and then by human policy.* He advanced* church-men; he was tender* in the privilege of sanctuaries, though they wrought* him much mischief; he built and endowed many religious foundations, besides his memorable hospital of the Savoy; and yet was he a great alms-giver in secret, which shewed that his works in public were dedicated rather to God's glory than his own. He professed always to love and seek peace; and it was his usual preface in his treaties that when Christ

¹ Won favour with.

⁴ Royal appearance, demeanour.

⁵ A gift normally bestowed by Kings at their coronation.

⁶ Bacon has followed Speed's chronology: the King in fact died in 1509, probably on 21 April, having reigned twenty-four years and eight months.

¹ These paired terms, *virtu* and *fortuna* (human endeavour as opposed to chance or luck), were much used in the 'new' Renaissance historical school deriving from Machiavelli. See again p. 203.

² Worthy of being noted (as something unusual).

came into the world peace was sung,³ and when he went out of the world peace was bequeathed. And this virtue could not proceed out of fear or softness*, for he was valiant and active, and therefore no doubt it was truly Christian and moral. Yet he knew the way to peace was not to seem to be desirous to avoid wars. Therefore would he make offers and fames* of wars, till he had mended* the conditions of peace.

It was also much*, that one that was so great a lover of peace should be so happy* in war. For his arms, either in foreign or civil wars, were never infortunate, neither did he know what a disaster meant. The war of his coming in, and the rebellions of the Earl of Lincoln and the Lord Audley, were ended by victory; the wars of France and Scotland, by peaces sought at his hands;⁴ that of Brittany, by accident of the Duke's death; the insurrection of the Lord Lovel, and that of Perkin at Exeter and in Kent, by flight of the rebels before they came to blows; so that his fortune of arms was still inviolate.* The rather sure, for that in the quenching of the commotions of his subjects he ever went in person; sometimes reserving himself to back and second his lieutenants, but ever in action. And yet that was not merely forwardness*, but partly distrust of others.

He did much maintain and countenance* his laws, which (nevertheless) was no impediment to him to work his will.⁵ For it was so handled that neither prerogative⁶ nor profit* went to diminution.⁷ And yet as he would sometimes strain up* his laws to his prerogative, so would he also let down his prerogative to his parliament; for mint* and wars and martial discipline (things of absolute power) he would nevertheless bring⁸ to parliament. Justice was well administered in his time, save where the King was party;⁹ save also that the council-table intermeddled too much with *meum* and *tuum*.¹⁰ For it was a very court of justice during his time, especially

³ Predicted or announced, as the Latin version puts it.

⁴ That is, the Latin version adds, sought by the enemy.

⁵ Bacon had made this point in his earlier sketch (p. 213), which Speed quoted.

⁶ The Sovereign's right or privilege, subject to no restriction or interference.

⁷ Were diminished.

⁸ Refer (for consultation).

⁹ Was involved as plaintiff in a legal case.

¹⁰ 'Mine and thine', the traditional phrase for property rights

in the beginning. But in that part both of justice and policy, which is the making of good laws, he did excel.

And with his justice he was also a merciful prince, as in whose time there were but three of the nobility that suffered: the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Lord Audley; though the first two were instead of numbers¹¹ in the dislike and obloquy* of the people. But there were never so great rebellions expiated with so little blood drawn by the hand of justice as the two rebellions of Blackheath and Exeter. As for the severity used upon those which were taken in Kent, it was but upon a scum of people. His pardons went ever both before and after his sword. But then he had withal a strange kind of interchanging of large and unexpected pardons with severe executions: which (his wisdom considered) could not be imputed to any inconstancy or inequality*, but either to some reason which we do not now know, or to a principle he had set unto himself, that he would vary and try both ways in turn.

But the less blood he drew the more he took of treasure; and as some¹² construed it, he was the more sparing in the one that he might be the more pressing in the other, for both would have been intolerable. Of nature assuredly he coveted to accumulate treasure, and was a little poor¹³ in admiring riches. The people (into whom there is infused for the preservation of monarchies a natural desire to discharge¹⁴ their princes, though it be with the unjust charge* of their counsellors and ministers) did impute this unto Cardinal Morton and Sir Reginald Bray; who as it after appeared (as counsellors of ancient authority with him) did so second his humours,¹⁵ as nevertheless they did temper* them. Whereas Empson and Dudley that followed, being persons that had no reputation with him otherwise than by the servile following of his bent*, did not give way only (as the first did) but shape him way¹⁶ to those extremities*, for which himself was touched with remorse at his death; and which his successor renounced, and sought to purge.¹⁷

¹¹ Altogether.

¹² Those ill disposed to him, the Latin text adds.

¹³ Morally weak, deficient.

¹⁴ To clear from blame for bad actions.

¹⁵ Support his ambitions or whims.

¹⁶ Make the path easy for him.

¹⁷ Henry VIII had Empson and Dudley executed on 17 August 1510.

This excess of his had at that time many glosses and interpretations. Some thought the continual rebellions wherewith he had been vexed had made him grow to hate his people; some thought it was done to pull down their stomachs¹⁸ and to keep them low; some, for that he would leave his son a golden fleece; some suspected he had some high design upon foreign parts. But those perhaps shall come nearest the truth that fetch not their reasons so far off, but rather impute it to nature, age,¹⁹ peace, and a mind fixed upon no other ambition or pursuit. Whereunto I should add that, having every day occasion to take notice of the necessities and shifts* for money of other great Princes abroad, it did the better by comparison set* off to him the felicity of full coffers. As to his expending of treasure he never spared charge which his affairs required, and in his buildings was magnificent;²⁰ but his rewards were very limited. So that his liberality was rather upon²¹ his own state and memory than upon the deserts of others.

He was of an high* mind, and loved his own will and his own way; as one that revered himself, and would reign indeed. Had he been a private man he would have been termed proud, but in a wise Prince, it was but keeping of distance;²² which indeed he did towards all, not admitting any near or full approach either to his power or to his secrets; for he was governed by none. His Queen (notwithstanding she had presented him with divers children, and with a crown also, though he would not acknowledge it) could do nothing with him. His mother he revered much, heard little. For any person agreeable to him for society (such as was Hastings to King Edward the Fourth, or Charles Brandon after to King Henry the Eighth), he had none; except we should account for such persons Fox and Bray and Empson, because they were so much with him. But it was but as the instrument is much with the workman. He had nothing in him of vain-glory*, but yet kept state* and majesty to the height; being sensible that majesty maketh the people bow, but vain-glory boweth to²³ them.

¹⁸ Reduce their pride.

¹⁹ The weight of old age, as the Latin text puts it.

²⁰ For Henry's lavish expenditure on pageantry and court ceremonial see Chrimes, *Henry VII*, pp. 305-7.

²¹ Directed towards.

²² Towards his subjects, the Latin adds.

²³ Depends on.

To his confederates abroad he was constant and just, but not open. But rather such was his inquiry and such his closeness as they stood in the light towards him, and he stood in the dark²⁴ to them; yet without strangeness*, but with a semblance of mutual communication of affairs. As for little envies or emulations upon* foreign princes (which are frequent with many Kings), he had never any, but went substantially to his own business. Certain it is, that though his reputation was great at home yet it was greater abroad. For foreigners that could not see the passages of affairs, but made their judgements upon the issues of them, noted that he was ever in strife* and ever aloft.* It grew also from the airs* which the princes and states abroad received from their ambassadors and agents here, which were attending the court in great number, whom he did not only content with courtesy, reward, and privateness*, but (upon such conferences* as passed with them) put them in admiration to find²⁵ his universal insight into the affairs of the world; which, though he did suck* chiefly from themselves, yet that which he had gathered from them all seemed admirable* to every one. So that they did write ever to their superiors in high terms concerning his wisdom and art of rule. Nay when they were returned,²⁶ they did commonly maintain intelligence²⁷ with him, such a dexterity he had to improprieate* to himself all foreign instruments.²⁸

He was careful and liberal to obtain good intelligence from all parts abroad; wherein he did not only use his interest in the liegers* here, and his pensioners²⁹ which he had both in the court of Rome and other the courts of Christendom, but the industry and vigilancy of his own ambassadors in foreign parts. For which purpose his instructions were ever extreme curious* and articulate*, and in them more articles touching inquisition* than touching negotiation; requiring likewise from his ambassadors an answer in particular distinct articles, respectively to his questions.

As for his secret spials which he did employ both at home and abroad, by them to discover what practices and conspiracies were

²⁴ They were open, transparent to him; he was opaque, hidden to them

²⁵ At finding.

²⁶ Called home.

²⁷ Exchange information

²⁸ The ministers of foreign rulers

²⁹ Spies and others who received pensions (salaries) for supplying information.

against him, surely his case required it, he had such moles perpetually working and casting* to undermine him. Neither can it be reprehended*, for if spials be lawful against lawful enemies, much more against conspirators and traitors. But indeed to give them credence* by oaths or curses,³⁰ that cannot be well maintained*, for those³¹ are too holy vestments for a disguise. Yet surely there was this further good in his employing of these flies* and familiars*, that as the use of them was cause that many conspiracies were revealed, so the fame and suspicion of them kept (no doubt) many conspiracies from being attempted.

Towards his Queen he was nothing uxorious*, nor scarce indulgent, but companiable and respective*, and without jealousy. Towards his children he was full of paternal affection, careful of their education, aspiring to their high advancement, regular to see that they should not want of any due honour and respect, but not greatly willing to cast any popular lustre³² upon them.

To his council he did refer much, and sat oft in person, knowing it to be the way to assist his power and inform his judgement; in which respect also he was fairly patient of liberty both of advice and of vote, till himself were declared.³³

He kept a strait* hand on his nobility, and chose rather to advance clergymen and lawyers, which were more obsequious* to him but had less interest in³⁴ the people; which made* for his absoluteness*, but not for his safety. Insomuch as I am persuaded it was one of the causes of his troublesome reign, for that his nobles, though they were loyal and obedient, yet did not co-operate with him but let every man go his own way.³⁵ He was not afraid of an able man, as Lewis the Eleventh was. But contrariwise, he was served by the ablest men that then were to be found, without which his affairs could not have prospered as they did. For war, Bedford, Oxford, Surrey, Daubeney, Brooke, Poynings. For other³⁶ affairs, Morton,

³⁰ To have his spies publicly cursed (as Henry did: see p. 106), in order to make them appear as his enemies.

³¹ Solemn oaths.

³² Public distinction.

³³ Till he made his intention known.

³⁴ Concern for, relation to.

³⁵ Bacon makes this point again in 'Of Empire', p. 241, but he has exaggerated the nobility's unwillingness to co-operate.

³⁶ That is, civil affairs.

Fox, Bray, the Prior of Llanthony, Warham, Urswick, Hussey, Frowick, and others. Neither did he care how cunning they were that he did employ, for he thought himself to have the master-reach.* And as he chose well, so he held* them up well. For it is a strange thing, that though he were a dark* prince, and infinitely suspicious, and his times full of secret conspiracies and troubles, yet in twenty-four years reign he never put down or discomposed* counsellor or near servant, save only Stanley the Lord Chamberlain. As for the disposition of his subjects in general towards him, it stood thus with him, that of the three affections which naturally tie the hearts of the subjects to their sovereign – love, fear, and reverence – he had the last in height; the second in good measure; and so little of the first as he was beholding* to the other two.

He was a Prince, sad*, serious, and full of thoughts and secret observations; and full of notes and memorials* of his own hand, especially touching persons, as whom to employ, whom to reward, whom to inquire of, whom to beware of, what were the dependencies,³⁷ what were the factions, and the like; keeping (as it were) a journal* of his thoughts.* There is to this day a merry tale that his monkey (set* on as it was thought by one of his chamber) tore his principal note-book all to pieces, when by chance it lay forth;³⁸ whereat the court which liked not those pensive accounts was almost tickled with sport.*

He was indeed full of apprehensions and suspicions. But as he did easily take³⁹ them, so he did easily check them and master them; whereby they were not dangerous, but troubled himself more than others. It is true, his thoughts were so many as they could not well always stand* together; but that which did good one way, did hurt another. Neither did he at some times weigh them aright in their proportions.⁴⁰ Certainly that rumour which did him so much mischief (that the Duke of York should be saved and alive) was (at the first) of his own nourishing, because he would* have more reason not to reign in the right of his wife. He was affable*, and both well and fair spoken,⁴¹ and would use strange sweetness and blandish-

³⁷ Dependents, supporters (of other factions).

³⁸ Was lying around.

³⁹ Was affected by them.

⁴⁰ He did not always excel in judging affairs correctly, as the Latin puts it.

⁴¹ Both correct and eloquent.

ments* of words where he desired to effect or persuade any thing that he took to heart. He was rather studious than learned*, reading most books that were of any worth in the French tongue. Yet he understood the Latin, as appeareth in that Cardinal Hadrian and others, who could very well have written French, did use to write to him in Latin.

For his pleasures, there is no news of them. And yet by his instructions⁴² to Marsin and Stile touching the Queen of Naples, it seemeth he could interrogate well touching beauty. He did by⁴³ pleasures as great Princes do by banquets, come and look a little upon them, and turn way. For never Prince was more wholly given to his affairs, nor in them more of himself;⁴⁴ insomuch as in triumphs of jousts and tourneys* and balls and masks (which they then called disguises*) he was rather a princely and gentle* spectator than seemed much to be delighted.

No doubt, in him as in all men (and most of all in Kings) his fortune wrought* upon his nature, and his nature upon his fortune. He attained to the crown not only from a private fortune, which might endow him with moderation, but also from the fortune of an exiled man,⁴⁵ which had quickened in him all seeds of observation and industry.⁴⁶ And his times being rather prosperous than calm, had raised his confidence by success but almost marred his nature by troubles. His wisdom, by often evading from perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him than into a providence* to prevent* and remove them afar off. And even in nature, the sight of his mind was like some sights of eyes, rather strong at hand* than to carry* afar off. For his wit* increased upon the occasion, and so much the more if the occasion were sharpened by danger.

Again, whether it were the shortness of his foresight,⁴⁷ or the strength of his will, or the dazzling of his suspicions,⁴⁸ or what it was, certain it is that the perpetual troubles of his fortunes (there being no more matter out of which they grew) could not have been

⁴² Above, p. 185.

⁴³ Concerning.

⁴⁴ In his element.

⁴⁵ From the state of having lived in exile.

⁴⁶ See Bacon's sketch (p. 212).

⁴⁷ On this judgement see Introduction, pp. xxiv ff

⁴⁸ Confusion, caused by his suspicious nature.

without some great defects and main errors in his nature, customs, and proceedings, which he had enough to do to save and help with a thousand little industries* and watches.* But those do best appear in the story itself. Yet take him with all his defects, if a man should compare him with the Kings his concurrents* in France and Spain, he shall find him more politic* than Lewis the Twelfth of France, and more entire* and sincere* than Ferdinando of Spain. But if you shall change Lewis the Twelfth for Lewis the Eleventh, who lived a little before, then the consort* is more perfect. For that Lewis the Eleventh, Ferdinando, and Henry, may be esteemed for the *tres* magi* of kings of those ages. To conclude, if this King did no greater matters, it was long* of himself, for what he minded* he compassed.*

He was a comely personage*, a little above just* stature, well and straight limbed, but slender. His countenance was reverend, and a little like a churchman*; and as it was not strange* or dark* so neither was it winning or pleasing, but as the face of one well disposed.⁴⁹ But it was to the disadvantage of the painter, for it was best⁵⁰ when he spake.

His worth* may bear a tale or two, that may put* upon him somewhat that may seem divine. When the Lady Margaret his mother had divers great suitors for marriage, she dreamed one night that one in the likeness of a bishop in pontifical* habit did tender* her Edmund, Earl of Richmond (the King's father) for her husband. Neither had she ever any child but the King, though she had three husbands.

One day when King Henry the Sixth (whose innocency gave him holiness) was washing his hands at a great feast, and cast his eye upon King Henry, then a young youth, he said, 'This is the lad that shall possess quietly that that we now strive for.' But that that was truly divine in him, was that he had the fortune of a true Christian as well as of a great King, in living exercised* and dying repentant. So as he had an happy warfare in both conflicts, both of sin and the cross.

He was born at Pembroke Castle, and lieth buried at Westminster, in one of the stateliest and daintiest* monuments of Europe,

⁴⁹ Good-humoured, benign

⁵⁰ At its best, most lively.

both for the chapel and for the sepulchre.⁵¹ So that he dwelleth more richly dead in the monument of his tomb, than he did alive in Richmond or any of his palaces. I could wish he did the like in this monument of his fame.

⁵¹ The Chapel of Henry VII at the east end of Westminster Abbey, built between 1503 and c.1512, 'was begun with a view to being a shrine of Henry VI, who Henry VII hoped might be canonized, and at the same time a chantry chapel for himself' The aisles and chapels have 'a fan-vault of the most glorious richness and size . . . Technically it is all a spectacular tour de force.' The funeral monument, by Pietro Torrigiani, who had been a pupil of Ghirlandaio at the same time as Michelangelo, 'is a tomb-chest with recumbent effigies', a traditional arrangement yet with 'a gentleness and tenderness and a union of life-likeness with sheer beauty of modelling unprecedented in England': Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London. I The Cities of London and Westminster*, 3rd edn, rev. Bridget Cherry (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 417-18, 438-9. James Lee-Milne describes it as 'the greatest work of art of the early Renaissance to survive in England and unquestionably one of the noblest monuments in northern Europe': *Tudor Renaissance* (London, 1951), p. 29.

Fragmentary Histories

The History of the Reign of K. Henry the Eighth, K. Edward, Q. Mary, and Part of the Reign of Q. Elizabeth¹

The books which are written do in their kinds represent the faculties of the mind of man: Poesy his imagination; Philosophy his reason; and History his memory. Of which three faculties least exception is commonly taken to memory; because imagination is oftentimes idle, and reason litigious. So likewise History of all writings deserveth least taxation*, as that which holdeth least of the author, and most of the things themselves. Again, the use which it holdeth to man's life, if it be not the greatest, yet assuredly is the freest from any ill accident* or quality. For those which are conversant much in poets, as they attain to great variety, so withal they become conceited; and those that are brought up in philosophy and sciences do wax (according as their nature is) some of them too stiff and opinionate, and some others too perplexed and confused.

¹ This work was written while Queen Elizabeth was still reigning, and represents Bacon's first attempt at a history of the Tudors. A few years later, writing to Lord Chancellor Egerton (2 April 1605), Bacon outlined his plan to write a History of Great Britain, to deal with 'the times which have passed since King Henry the Eighth' (S, III.249-52). In the *Advancement of Learning*, published later that year, Bacon had shifted the starting-point back to Henry VII's reign, urging the desirability of a history 'from the Uniting of the Roses to the Uniting of the Kingdoms' under James (S, III.336; V, 181). Bacon loaned this sketch to John Speed, who quoted it as 'fragm. MS. of Sr. Fr.B.' in his *Historie of Great Britaine* (London, 1611). It was first published (anonymously) in *Cabala* (London, 1663). Spedding took his text (S, VI.17-22), which I reproduce, from an early seventeenth-century MS in the British Library (BcF 216).

Whereas History possesseth the mind of the conceits which are nearest allied unto action, and imprinteth them so, as it doth not alter the complexion of the mind neither to irresolution nor pertinacity. But this is true, that in no sort of writings there is a greater distance between the good and the bad, no not between the most excellent poet and the vainest rhymers, nor between the deepest philosopher and the most frivolous schoolmen, than there is between good histories and those that bear the same or the like title.

In which regard, having purposed to write the History of England from the beginning of the reign of K. Henry the Eighth of that name near unto the present time, wherein Q. Elizabeth reigneth in good felicity, I am delivered of the excuse wherewith the best writers of history are troubled in their proëms, when they go about without breaking the bounds of modesty to give a reason why they should write that again which others have written well or at least tolerably before. For those which I am to follow are such as I may rather fear the reproach of coming into their number, than the opinion of presumption if I hope to do better than they. But in the mean time it must be considered that the best of the ancient histories were contrived out of divers particular Commentaries, Relations, and Narrations, which it was not hard to digest with ornament, and thereof to compound one entire Story. And as at the first such writers had the ease of other's labours, so since they have the whole commendation; in regard these former writings are for the most part lost, whereby their borrowings do not appear. But unto me the disadvantage is great, finding no public memories of any consideration or worth, in sort that the supply must be out of the freshness of memory and tradition, and out of the acts, instruments, and negotiations of state themselves, together with the glances* of foreign histories; which though I do acknowledge to be the best originals and instructions out of which to write an history, yet the travail must be much greater than if there had been already digested any tolerable chronicle as a simple narration of the actions themselves, which should only have needed out of the former helps to be enriched with the counsels and the speeches and notable particularities. And this was the reason why I might not attempt to go higher to more ancient times, because those helps and grounds did more and more fail; although, if I be not deceived, I may truly affirm that there have no times passed over in this nation which

have produced greater actions, nor more worthy to be delivered to the ages hereafter. For they be not the great wars and conquests (which many times are the works of fortune and fall out in barbarous times) the rehearsal whereof maketh the profitable and instructing history, but rather times refined in policies and industries, new and rare variety of accidents and alterations, equal and just encounters of state and state in forces and of prince and prince in sufficiency*, that bring upon the stage the best parts for observation.

Now if you look into the general natures of the times (which I have undertaken) throughout Europe, whereof the times of this nation must needs participate, you shall find more knowledge in the world than was in the ages before, whereby the wits of men (which are the shops wherein all actions are forged) are more furnished and improved.² Then, if you shall restrain your consideration to the state of this monarchy, first there will occur unto you changes rare, and altogether unknown to antiquity, in matters of religion and the state ecclesiastical.³ Then to behold the several reigns⁴ – of a king that first, or next the first, became absolute in the sovereignty; of a king in minority; of a queen married to a foreigner; and lastly of a queen that hath governed without the help either of a marriage, or of any mighty man of her blood – is no small variety in the affairs of a monarchy, but such as perhaps in four successions in any state at any time is hardly to be found. Besides, there have not wanted examples within the compass of the same times neither of an usurpation, nor of rebellions under heads of greatness, nor of commotions merely popular, nor of sundry desperate conspiracies (an unwonted thing in hereditary monarchies), nor of foreign wars of all sorts: invasive, repulsive of invasion; open and declared, covert and under-hand; by sea, by land; Scottish, French, Spanish; succours, protections, new and extraordinary kinds of confederacies with subjects. Generally without question, the state of this nation never had a larger reach to import* the universal affairs of Europe; as that which was in the former part of the time the counterpoise between France and Spain, and in the latter the only encounter and opposition against Spain. Add hereunto the new discoveries and

² Bacon refers to the revival of learning in the Renaissance.

³ The Protestant Reformation.

⁴ Those of the four monarchs described in the title.

navigations abroad, the new provisions of laws and precedents of state at home, and the accidents memorable both of state and of court, and there will be no doubt but the times which I have chosen are of all former times of this nation the fittest to be registered; if it be not in this respect, that they be of too fresh memory, which point I know very well will be a prejudice, as if this story were written in favour of the time present. But it shall suffice unto me, without betraying mine own name and memory or the liberty of a history, to procure this commendation to the time with posterity, namely, that a private man living in the same time should not doubt* to publish an history of the time which should not carry any show or taste at all of flattery; a point noted for an infallible demonstration of a good time.

King Henry, the seventh of that name, after he had lived about fifty-two years, and thereof reigned twenty-three and some months, deceased of a consumption the 22nd day of April, in the palace which he had built at Richmond, in the year of our Redemption 1509. This king attained unto the crown, not only from a private fortune, which might endow him with moderation, but also from the fortune of an exiled man, which had quickened in him all seeds of observation and industry. His times were rather prosperous than calm, for he was assailed with many troubles, which he overcame happily; a matter that did no less set forth his wisdom than his fortune; and yet such a wisdom as seemed rather a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him, than any deep foresight to prevent them afar off. Jealous he was over the greatness of his Nobility, as remembering how himself was set up. And much more did this humour increase in him after he had conflicted with such idols and counterfeits as were Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, the strangeness of which dangers made him think nothing safe. Whereby he was forced to descend to the employment of secret espials and suborned conspirators, a necessary remedy against so dark and subtle practices; and not to be reprehended, except it were true which some report, that he had intelligence with confessors for the revealing of matters disclosed in confession. And yet if a man compare him with the kings his concurrents in France and Spain, he shall find him more politic than Lewis the Twelfth of France, and more entire and sincere than Ferdinando of Spain, upon whom

notwithstanding he did handsomely bestow the envy* of the death of Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick.

Great and devout reverence he bare unto religion, as he that employed ecclesiastical men in most of his affairs and negotiations; and as he that was brought hardly and very late to the abolishing of the privilege of sanctuaries in case of treason, and that not before he had obtained it by way of suit from Pope Alexander; which sanctuaries nevertheless had been the forges of most of his troubles.

In his government he was led by none, scarcely by his laws, and yet he was a great observer of formality in all his proceedings, which notwithstanding was no impediment to the working of his will; and in the suppressing and punishing of the treasons which during the whole course of his reign were committed against him, he had a very strange kind of interchanging of very large and unexpected pardons with severe executions; which (his wisdom considered) could not be imputed to any inconstancy or inequality, but to a discretion, or at least to a principle that he had apprehended, that it was good not obstinately to pursue one course, but to try both ways.

In his wars, he seemed rather confident than enterprising, by which also commonly he was not the poorer; but generally he did seem inclinable to live in peace, and made but offers of war to mend the conditions of peace; and in the quenching of the commotions of his subjects he was ever ready to achieve those wars in person, sometimes reserving himself, but never retiring himself, but as ready to second.

Of nature he coveted to accumulate treasure, which the people (into whom there is infused for the preservation of monarchies a natural desire to discharge their princes, though it be with the unjust charge of their counsellors and ministers), did impute unto Cardinal Morton and Sir Reginald Bray, who (as it after appeared) as counsellors of ancient authority with him, did so second his humour as they tempered and refrained it. Whereas Empson and Dudley that followed (being persons that had no reputation with him, otherwise than the servile following of his own humour) gave him way and shaped him way to those extremities, wherewith himself was touched with remorse at his death, and which his successor disavowed. In expending of treasure he never spared charge that his affairs required, and in his foundations was magnificent enough, but

his rewards were very limited; so that his liberality was rather upon his own state and memory than towards the deserts of others. He chose commonly to employ cunning persons, as he that knew himself sufficient to make use of their uttermost reaches, without danger of being abused with them himself.

The Beginning of the History of Great Britain¹

By the decease of Elizabeth, Queen of England, the issues of King Henry the Eighth failed; being spent in one generation and three successions. For that King, though he were one of the goodliest persons of his time, yet he left only by his six wives three children; who reigning successively and dying childless, made place to the

¹ This piece was first published in Rawley's *Resuscitatio* (1657), a volume which also reprinted an undated letter described as addressed 'to the King upon sending him a beginning of the history of his Majesty's times'. Since that letter is placed in all the collections among those which belong to the early part of James's reign, Spedding assigned it to the summer of 1610 (when James is known to have been reading Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* in MS). In it Bacon writes: 'It may please your Majesty: Hearing that you are at leisure to peruse story, a desire took me to make an experiment what I could do in your Majesty's times. Which being but a leaf or two, I pray your pardon if I send it for your recreation, considering that love must creep where it cannot go. But to this I add these petitions. First, that if your Majesty do dislike any thing, you would conceive I can amend it upon your least beck. Next, if I have not spoken of your Majesty encomiastically, your Majesty will be pleased only to ascribe it to the law of an history, which doth not clutter together praises upon the first mention of a name, but rather disperseth and weaveth them throughout the whole narration, and as for the proper place of a commemoration (which is in the period of life) I pray God I may never live to write it. Thirdly, that the reason why I presumed to think of this oblation, was because, whatsoever my disability be, yet I shall have that advantage which (almost) no writer of history hath had; in that I shall write of times not only since I could remember, but since I could observe. And lastly, that it is only for your Majesty's reading' (S, XI. 218-19). Spedding printed his text of this fragment (S, VI. 275-9), which I reproduce, from an early mid-seventeenth-century MS at Chatsworth House (BcF 105). He said of it: 'As an account of the temper of men's minds at James's entrance, it is complete; and in my judgement one of the best things in its kind that Bacon ever wrote' (S, VI. 274).

line of Margaret, his eldest sister, married to James the Fourth King of Scotland. There succeeded therefore to the kingdom of England James the Sixth, then King of Scotland, descended of the same Margaret both by father and mother; so that by a rare event in the pedigrees of Kings, it seemed as if the Divine Providence, to extinguish and take away all note of a stranger, had doubled upon his person, within the circle of one age, the royal blood of England by both parents. This succession drew towards it the eyes of all men; being one of the most memorable accidents* that had happened a long time in the Christian world. For the kingdom of France having been re-united in the age before in all the provinces thereof formerly dismembered; and the kingdom of Spain being of more fresh memory united and made entire by the annexing of Portugal in the person of Philip the Second; there remained but this third and last union, for the counterpoising of the power of these three great monarchies, and the disposing of the affairs of Europe thereby to a more assured and universal peace and concord. And this event did hold men's observations and discourses the more, because the island of Great Britain, divided from the rest of the world, was never before united in itself under one King; notwithstanding the people be of one language, and not separate by mountains or great waters; and notwithstanding also that the uniting of them has been in former times industriously attempted both by war and treaty. Therefore it seemed a manifest work of Providence and case of reservation² for these times; insomuch as the vulgar conceived that there was now an end given and a consummation to superstitious prophecies (the belief of fools, but the talk sometimes of wise men), and to an ancient tacit expectation which had by tradition been infused* and inveterated* into men's minds. But as the best divinations and predictions are the politic and probable foresight and conjectures of wise men, so in this matter the providence of King Henry the Seventh was in all men's mouths, who, being one of the deepest* and most prudent princes of the world, upon the deliberation concerning the marriage of his eldest daughter into Scotland, had by some speech uttered by him showed himself sensible and almost prescient of this event.³

² Having been reserved till then.

³ See *Henry VII*, pp. 173-4.

Neither did there want a concurrence of divers rare external circumstances (besides the virtues and condition of the person) which gave great reputation to this succession. A king,⁴ in the strength of his years, supported with great alliances abroad, established with royal issue at home, at peace with all the world, practised in the regiment of such a kingdom as might rather enable* a king by variety of accidents than corrupt him with affluence or vain-glory; and one that besides his universal capacity and judgement, was notably exercised and practised in matters of religion and the church; which in these times by the confused use of both swords are become so intermixed with considerations of estate, as most of the counsels of sovereign princes or republics depend upon them. But nothing did more fill foreign nations with admiration and expectation of his succession, than the wonderful and (by them) unexpected consent of all estates and subjects of England for the receiving of the King without the least scruple, pause, or question. For it had been generally dispersed* by the fugitives beyond the seas (who partly to apply themselves to the ambition of foreigners, and partly to give estimation and value to their own employments, used to represent the state of England in a false light), that after Queen Elizabeth's decease there must follow in England nothing but confusions, interreigns, and perturbations of estate; likely far to exceed the ancient calamities of the civil wars between the houses of Lancaster and York, by how much more the dissensions were like to be more mortal and bloody when foreign competition should be added to domestical, and divisions for religion to matter of title to the crown. And in special, Parsons the Jesuit,⁵ under a disguised name, had not long before published an express treatise, wherein whether his malice made him believe his own fancies, or whether he thought it the fittest way to move sedition, like evil spirits which seem to foretell the tempest they mean to move, he laboured to display and give colour to all the vain pretences and dreams of succession which

⁴ James I.

⁵ Robert Parsons, or Persons (1514–1610), Jesuit missionary and controversialist, who published many violent treatises against the Church of England and Elizabeth's government, including *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of England* (1595).

he could imagine; and thereby had possessed many abroad, that knew not the affairs here, with those his vanities.

Neither wanted there here within this realm divers persons both wise and well affected, who though they doubted not of the undoubted right, yet setting before themselves the waves of peoples' hearts (guided no less by sudden temporary winds than by the natural course and motion of the waters), were not without fear what might be the event. For Queen Elizabeth, being a Prince of extreme caution, and yet one that loved admiration* above safety, and knowing the declaration of a successor might in point of safety be disputable, but in point of admiration and respect assuredly to her disadvantage, had from the beginning set it down for a maxim of estate to impose a silence touching succession. Neither was it only reserved as a secret of estate, but restrained by severe laws, that no man should presume to give opinion or maintain argument touching the same; so though the evidence of right drew all the subjects of the land to think one thing, yet the fear of danger of law made no man privy to other's thought. And therefore it rejoiced all men to see so fair a morning of a kingdom, and to be thoroughly secured of former apprehensions; as a man that awaketh out of a fearful dream. But so it was, that not only the consent but the applause and joy was infinite and not* be expressed throughout the realm of England upon this succession; whereof the consent (no doubt) may be truly ascribed to the clearness of the right; but the general joy, alacrity, and gratulation were the effects of differing causes. For Queen Elizabeth, though she had the use of many both virtues and demonstrations* that might draw and knit unto her the heart of her people, yet nevertheless carrying a hand restrained in gift and strained in points of prerogative, could not answer the votes either of servants or subjects to a full contentment; especially in her latter days, when the continuance of her reign (which extended to five and forty years) might discover in people their natural desire and inclination towards change; so that a new court and a new reign were not to many unwelcome. Many were glad, and especially those of settled estate and fortunes, that the fears and incertainties were overblown and that the die* was cast: others that had made their way with the King or offered their service in the time of the former Queen, thought now the time was come for which they had prepared: and generally all such as had any dependence upon the late

Earl of Essex⁶ (who had mingled the secrecy of his own ends with the popular pretence of advancing the King's title) made account their cause was amended.* Again such as might misdoubt they had given the King any occasion of distaste, did continue by their forwardness and confidence to shew it was but their fastness* to the former government, and that those affections ended with the time. The Papists nourished their hopes by collating* the case of the Papists in England and under Queen Elizabeth and the case of the Papists in Scotland under the King; interpreting that the condition of them in Scotland was the less grievous, and divining of the King's government here accordingly; besides the comfort they ministered themselves from the memory of the Queen his mother. The ministers, and those which stood for the Presbytery,⁷ thought their cause had more sympathy with the discipline of Scotland than the hierarchy of England, and so took themselves to be a degree nearer their desires. Thus had every condition of persons some contemplation of benefit which they promised themselves; overreaching perhaps, according to the nature of hope, but yet not without some probable ground of conjecture. At which time also there came forth in print the King's book, entitled Βασιλικὸν Δῶρον,⁸ containing matter of instruction to the Prince his son touching the office of a king; which book falling into every man's hand filled the whole realm as with a good perfume or incense before the King's coming in. For being excellently written, and having nothing of affectation, it did not only satisfy better than particular reports touching the King's disposition; but far exceeded any formal or curious* edict or declaration which could have been devised of that nature, wherewith Princes at the beginning of their reigns do use to grace themselves, or at least express themselves gracious, in the eyes of their

⁶ Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex (1565–1601), a noted soldier, courtier, and favourite of Queen Elizabeth, whose treasonous rebellion in 1601 led to his execution.

⁷ The Presbyterian system, introduced in the late 1570s, by which the church was to be governed not by the hierarchy of bishops but by a body or assembly of presbyters or elders, all of equal rank.

⁸ Or 'Kingly gift', first published (anonymously) in 1599, and reissued in 1603 with the subtitle, *Or His Majesties Instructions to his Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* – that is, Henry Prince of Wales (1594–1612).

people. And this was, for the general, the state and constitution of men's minds upon this change. The actions themselves passed in this manner, etc.

[The rest is wanting.]

The Beginning of The History of The Reign of King Henry the Eighth¹

After the decease of that wise and fortunate King, King Henry the Seventh, who died in the height of his prosperity, there followed (as useth to do when the sun setteth so exceeding clear) one of the fairest mornings of a kingdom that hath been known in this land or anywhere else. A young King about eighteen years of age, for stature, strength, making, and beauty, one of the goodliest persons of his time. And although he were given to pleasure, yet he was likewise desirous of glory; so that there was a passage open in his mind by glory for virtue. Neither was he unadorned with learning, though therein he came short of his brother Arthur. He had never any the least pique, difference, or jealousy, with the King his father, which

¹ Bacon began this work at the 'commandment' of Prince Charles, as he recorded in a letter to Tobie Matthew on 26 June 1623, complaining at the same time that 'I find Sir Robert Cotton, who poured forth what he had in my former work, somewhat dainty of his materials in this' (S, xiv.429). To the Prince he wrote, on 22 October 1623: 'For Henry the Eighth, to deal truly with your Highness, I did so despair of my health this summer, as I was glad to choose some such work as I might compass within days: so far was I from entering into any work of length' (S, xiv.436). The only surviving fragment was first published by Bacon's chaplain and secretary, William Rawley, in *Certain Miscellany Works of the Right Hon. Francis Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban* (London, 1629), who recorded in the Life prefixed to the *Resuscitatio* that Bacon had intended 'to have written the reign of King Henry the Eighth; but that work perished in the designation merely, God not lending him to proceed farther upon it than only in one morning's work; whereof there is extant an *ex ungue leonem*' (S, i.10) – this elliptical phrase means, 'judge the lion from his claws'. Spedding took his text (S, vi.269–70) from a mid-seventeenth-century MS copy in the British Library (BcF 106).

might give any occasion of altering court or counsel upon the change; but all things passed in a still. He was the first heir of the White and of the Red Rose;² so that there was no discontented party now left in the kingdom, but all men's hearts turned towards him; and not only their hearts, but their eyes also; for he was the only son of the kingdom. He had no brother; which though it be a comfort for Kings to have, yet it draweth the subjects' eyes a little aside. And yet being a married man in those young years, it promised hope of speedy issue to succeed in the Crown. Neither was there any Queen Mother, who might share any way in the government or clash with the counsellors for authority, while the King intended his pleasure. No such thing as any great or mighty subject who might eclipse or overshadow the imperial power. And for the people and state in general, they were in such lowness of obedience, as subjects were like to yield who had lived almost four and twenty years under so politic a King as his father; being also one who came partly in by the sword, and had so high a courage in all points of regality, and was ever victorious in rebellions and seditions of the people. The Crown extremely rich and full of treasure; and the kingdom like to be so in short time. For there was no war, no dearth, no stop of trade or commerce; it was only the Crown which sucked too hard;³ but now being full, and upon the head of a young King, it was like to draw the less. Lastly, he was inheritor of his father's reputation, which was great throughout the world. He had strait* alliance with the two neighbour states, an ancient enemy in former times, and an ancient friend, Scotland and Burgundy. He had peace and amity with France, under the assurance not only of treaty and league, but of necessity and inability in the French to do him hurt, in respect the French King's designs were wholly bent upon Italy. So that it may be truly said, there had been scarcely seen or known in many ages such a rare concurrence of signs and promises of a happy and flourishing reign to ensue, as were now met in this young King, called after his father's name, Henry the Eighth.

² Henry VII, by his marriage to Elizabeth (Woodville) of York, united the Yorkist and Lancaster dynasties.

³ Alluding to the King's severe financial exactions.

From the *ESSAYS* (1625)

Of Simulation and Dissimulation

Dissimulation¹ is but a faint kind of policy* or wisdom; for it asketh a strong wit* and a strong heart to know when to tell truth, and to do it. Therefore it is the weaker sort of politiques* that are the great dissemblers.

Tacitus² saith, 'Livia sorted* well with the arts of her husband and dissimulation of her son'; attributing arts or policy to Augustus, and dissimulation to Tiberius. And again, when Mucianus³ encourageth Vespasian to take arms against Vitellius, he saith, 'We rise not against the piercing judgement of Augustus, nor the extreme caution or closeness* of Tiberius.' These properties*, of arts or policy and dissimulation or closeness, are indeed habits and faculties several*, and to be distinguished. For if a man have that penetration of judgement as he can discern what things are to be laid open, and what to be secreted, and what to be shewed at half lights,⁴ and to whom and when (which indeed are arts of state* and arts of life, as Tacitus⁵ well calleth them), to him a habit of dissimulation is a hinderance and a poorness. But if a man cannot obtain* to that judgement, then it is left to him generally to be close*, and a dissembler. For where a man cannot choose or vary in particulars, there it is good to take the safest and wariest way in general; like the going* softly, by one that cannot well see. Certainly the ablest men that ever were have had an openness* and frankness of dealing; and a name of certainty⁶ and veracity; but then they were like horses well managed*; for they could tell passing well when to stop or turn; and at such times when they thought the case indeed required

¹ Concealment (under a feigned semblance). Bacon's treatment of this topic overlaps that of Francesco Guicciardini, in his *Ricordi*, a collection of observations and precepts assembled during the 1520s, and numbering 221 sections in its final recension (1530). Although this final version was not published in full until 1857, several earlier versions appeared (unofficially) in Italian during the sixteenth century, and were translated into French, Dutch, English and Spanish. See N. H. Thomson, *Counsels and Reflections of Francesco Guicciardini* (London, 1890); and Guicciardini, *Selected Writings*, ed. C. and M. Grayson (London, 1965).

² *Annals* v.1.

³ Mucianus commander of Syrian troops; cf. *Histories* ii.76.

⁴ In part; or 'by twilight' (the Latin translation has 'tanquam in crepusculo'). Cf. *Henry VIII*, p. 96.

⁵ *Annals* iii.70; *Agricola* xxxix.

⁶ Reputation for reliability.

dissimulation, if then they used it, it came to pass that the former opinion spread abroad of their good faith and clearness of dealing made them almost invisible.

There be three degrees of this hiding and veiling of a man's self. The first, Closeness, Reservation*, and Secrecy; when a man leaveth himself without observation, or without hold to be taken,⁷ what he is. The second, Dissimulation, in the negative; when a man lets fall signs and arguments*, that he is not that he is. And the third, Simulation* in the affirmative; when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be that he is not.

For the first of these, Secrecy; it is indeed the virtue of a confessor. And assuredly the secret man heareth many confessions. For who will open himself to a blab or babbler? But if a man be thought secret, it inviteth discovery*; as the more close air sucketh in the more open;⁸ and as in confession the revealing is not for worldly use, but for the ease of a man's heart, so secret men come to the knowledge of many things in that kind;⁹ while men rather discharge their minds than impart their minds. In few words, mysteries are due to secrecy.¹⁰ Besides (to say truth) nakedness is uncomely*, as well in mind as body; and it addeth no small reverence to men's manners and actions, if they be not altogether open. As for talkers and futile¹¹ persons, they are commonly vain and credulous withal. For he that talketh what he knoweth, will also talk what he knoweth not. Therefore set it down,¹² that an habit of secrecy is both politic and moral. And in this part*, it is good that a man's face give his tongue leave to speak.¹³ For the discovery of a man's self by the tracts* of his countenance is a great weakness and betraying; by how much it is many times more marked and believed than a man's words.

For the second, which is Dissimulation; it followeth many times upon* secrecy by a necessity; so that he that will be secret must be a dissembler in some degree. For men are too cunning to suffer* a

⁷ Without revealing himself (a 'hold' is a grip in wrestling).

⁸ As the confined air in a room gives way to the colder air from outside.

⁹ In the same way that a confessor does.

¹⁰ People who can keep a secret earn others' confidences.

¹¹ Unable to hold their tongue; Lat. *futulis*, 'easily pouring out'.

¹² Take note, as of an important truth.

¹³ That his facial expression does not reveal beforehand what the tongue has to say, or does not contradict what he has said.

man to keep an indifferent carriage between both, and to be secret, without swaying the balance on either side. They will so beset a man with questions, and draw him on, and pick it out of him, that, without an absurd¹⁴ silence, he must shew an inclination one way; or if he do not, they will gather as much by his silence as by his speech. As for equivocations,¹⁵ or oraculous speeches,¹⁶ they cannot hold out long. So that no man can be secret, except he give himself a little scope of dissimulation; which is, as it were, but the skirts or train of secrecy.

But for the third degree, which is Simulation and false* profession; that I hold more culpable, and less politic; except it be in great and rare matters. And therefore a general custom of simulation (which is this last degree) is a vice, rising either of a natural falseness or fearfulness, or of a mind that hath some main faults, which because a man must needs disguise, it maketh him practise simulation in other things, lest his hand should be out of ure.*

The great advantages of simulation and dissimulation are three. First, to lay asleep opposition, and to surprise. For where a man's intentions are published, it is an alarm* to call up all that are against them. The second is, to reserve to a man's self a fair* retreat. For if a man engage himself by a manifest declaration, he must go through or take a fall.¹⁷ The third is, the better to discover the mind of another. For to him that opens himself men will hardly shew themselves adverse; but will (fair)* let him go on, and turn their freedom of speech to freedom of thought.¹⁸ And therefore it is a good shrewd proverb of the Spaniard, 'Tell a lie and find a truth.' As if there were no way of discovery but by simulation. There be also three disadvantages, to set it even. The first, that simulation and dissimulation commonly carry with them a shew* of fearfulness, which in any business doth spoil the feathers of round flying up to the mark.¹⁹ The second, that it puzzleth and perplexeth the conceits* of many, that perhaps would otherwise co-operate with him; and makes a man walk almost alone to his own ends. The third

¹⁴ Deaf to reason, unreasonable.

¹⁵ Using a word in more than one sense, intending to deceive.

¹⁶ Obscure hints, often deceptive.

¹⁷ 'Take a fall': be thrown (another metaphor from wrestling).

¹⁸ Reserving judgement.

¹⁹ Prevent the arrow's direct ('round') flight to its target.

and greatest, is, that it depriveth a man of one of the most principal instruments for action; which is trust and belief. The best composition* and temperature²⁰ is to have openness in fame and opinion;²¹ secrecy in* habit; dissimulation in seasonable use; and a power to feign, if there be no remedy.

²⁰ Temperament (ideally, a balance between the humours).

²¹ Have a reputation for frankness.

Of Seditions and Troubles¹

Shepherds of people² had need know the calendars of tempests in state; which are commonly greatest when things grow to equality;³ as natural tempests are greatest about the *Equinoctia*.⁴ And as there are certain hollow blasts of wind and secret swellings of seas before a tempest, so are there in states:

Ille etiam caecos instare tumultus
Saepe monet, fraudesque et operta tumescere bella.⁵

Libels and licentious discourses against the state, when they are frequent and open, and in like sort, false news often running up and down to the disadvantage of the state, and hastily embraced, are amongst the signs of troubles. Virgil giving the pedigree of Fame, saith she was sister to the Giants:

Illam Terra parens, ira irritata Deorum,
Extremam (ut perhibent) Coeo Enceladoque sororem
Progenit.⁶

As if fames* were the relics of seditions past; but they are no less indeed the preludes of seditions to come. Howsoever he noteth it right, that seditious tumults and seditious fames differ no more but as brother and sister, masculine and feminine; especially if it come to that, that the best actions of a state, and the most plausible,* and which ought to give greatest contentment, are taken in ill sense, and traduced.* for that shews the envy* great, as Tacitus saith, 'conflata magna invidia, seu bene seu male gesta premunt'.⁷

¹ This essay is found in the MS collection preceding the 1612 edition, but was not printed there. (For that version see *S*, vi. 589.) The detail with which Bacon analyses civil disturbances shows the fear with which they were generally regarded throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

² Rulers, governors.

³ When the various levels of society gain equal power.

⁴ In the spring and autumn equinoxes, when the days and nights are equal in length, storms are more likely.

⁵ Virgil, *Georg.* i. 464–5: the sun 'often warns us that dark tumults threaten, and deceits and hidden wars are swelling'.

⁶ *Aeneid* iv. 178–80: 'Mother Earth (as they relate), irritated by anger against the gods, brought forth [Rumour] last as sister to Coeus and Enceladus.'

⁷ *Histories* i. 7 (adapted): 'when envy is once roused, good actions are as much assailed as bad'.

Neither doth it follow, that because these fumes are a sign of troubles, that the suppressing of them with too much severity should be a remedy of troubles. For the despising of them many times checks them best; and the going about to stop them doth but make a wonder long-lived. Also that kind of obedience which Tacitus speaketh of, is to be held suspected: 'Erant in officio, sed tamen qui mallent mandata imperantium interpretari quam exequi';⁸ disputing, excusing, cavilling* upon mandates* and directions,* is a kind of shaking off the yoke, and assay of disobedience; especially if in those disputings they which are for the direction speak fearfully* and tenderly,* and those that are against it audaciously.

Also, as Machiavel⁹ noteth well, when princes, that ought to be common parents,¹⁰ make themselves as a party,* and lean to a side, it is as a boat that is overthrown by uneven weight on the one side; as was well seen in the time of Henry the Third of France; for first himself entered league¹¹ for the extirpation of the Protestants; and presently after the same league was turned upon himself. For when the authority of princes is made but an accessory to a cause,¹² and that there be other bands* that tie faster* than the band of sovereignty, kings begin to be put almost out of possession.

Also, when discords, and quarrels, and factions, are carried¹³ openly and audaciously, it is a sign the reverence of government is lost. For the motions of the greatest persons in a government ought to be as the motions of the planets under *primum mobile*¹⁴ (according to the old opinion), which is, that every of them is carried swiftly by the highest motion, and softly in their own motion. And therefore, when great ones in their own particular¹⁵ motion move viol-

⁸ *Histories* ii.39 (adapted): 'They were on duty, but none the less preferred to interpret the orders of their generals rather than to follow them.'

⁹ *Discorsi* iii.27, on the danger of factions.

¹⁰ As if the parents of everyone in a state.

¹¹ Joined with. The Holy League, formed in 1576 by a group of Catholics to defend their faith and to destroy the Protestants, was expelled by King Henry III (1574-89) from Paris in 1585.

¹² Participating in some activity, but not as principal.

¹³ Carried on.

¹⁴ In Ptolemaic astronomy, the 'first mover' or outermost of the ten planetary spheres, from which the rest derive their motion, was supposedly set in motion by the Creator. For many Renaissance writers it was a favourite metaphor for the King's orderly rule of the state.

¹⁵ In the stars, the planet's individual motion; in the state, the (violent) actions of powerful men seeking their own gain.

ently, and, as Tacitus expresseth it well, 'liberius quam ut imperantium meminissent',¹⁶ it is a sign the orbs are out of frame.¹⁷ For reverence is that wherewith princes are girt* from God; who threat- eneth the dissolving thereof: 'Solvam cingula regum.'¹⁸

So when any of the four pillars of government are mainly* shaken or weakened (which are Religion, Justice, Counsel, and Treasure), men had need to pray for fair weather. But let us pass from this part* of predictions (concerning which, nevertheless, more light may be taken from that which followeth); and let us speak first of the Materials of seditions; then of the Motives¹⁹ of them; and thirdly of the Remedies.

Concerning the Materials of seditions. It is a thing well to be considered; for the surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them. For if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire. The matter* of seditions is of two kinds; much poverty and much discontentment. It is certain, so many overthrown estates,²⁰ so many votes for troubles. Lucan noteth well the state of Rome before the civil war,

Hinc usura vorax, rapidumque in tempore foenus,
Hinc concussa fides, et multis utile bellum.²¹

This same *multis utile bellum*, is an assured and infallible sign of a state disposed to seditions and troubles. And if this poverty and broken estate in the better sort be joined with a want and necessity in the mean people, the danger is imminent and great. For the rebellions of the belly²² are the worst. As for discontentments, they are in the politic body²³ like to humours* in the natural, which are

¹⁶ *Annals* iii.4 (adapted): 'More freely than if they had remembered their governors'

¹⁷ 'The system is disordered.'

¹⁸ A fusion of two texts, Job 12: 18 and Isa. 45: 1, 'I will loosen the girdles of kings', a threat that presages the break-up of society.

¹⁹ Bacon is using the Aristotelian categories of 'material cause' and 'efficient cause' (*Anal. Post.* ii.1, 94a-b; *Met.* iv.2, 1013). Material causes, described in the two following paragraphs, are situations generally existing (poverty, discontent); efficient causes, described in the fourth paragraph, are events taking place at a given point in time.

²⁰ Ruined fortunes; bankrupts.

²¹ *Pharsalia* i.181-2: 'Hence devouring usury and interest rapidly compounded, hence shaken credit, and war profitable to many.'

²² From hunger, in the 'mean people' or labouring classes.

²³ The state; civil society.

apt to gather a preternatural heat and to inflame. And let no prince measure the danger of them by this, whether they be just or unjust: for that were to imagine people to be too reasonable; who do often spurn at their own good: nor yet by this, whether the griefs* whereupon they rise be in fact great or small: for they are the most dangerous discontentments where the fear is greater than the feeling: 'Dolendi modus, timendi non item.'²⁴ Besides, in great oppressions, the same things that provoke the patience, do withal mate* the courage; but in fears it is not so. Neither let any prince or state be secure* concerning discontentments, because they have been often,* or have been long, and yet no peril hath ensued: for as it is true that every vapour or fume doth not turn into a storm; so it is nevertheless true that storms, though they blow over divers times, yet may fall at last; and, as the Spanish proverb noteth well, 'The cord breaketh at the last by the weakest pull.'

The Causes and Motives²⁵ of seditions are, innovation²⁶ in religion; taxes; alteration of laws and customs; breaking of privileges; general oppression; advancement of unworthy persons; strangers;²⁷ dearths; disbanded soldiers; factions grown desperate; and whatsoever, in offending people, joineth and knitteth* them in a common cause.

For the Remedies; there may be some general preservatives,* whereof we will speak: as for the just cure, it must answer to the particular disease; and so be left to counsel rather than rule.²⁸

The first remedy or prevention is to remove by all means possible that material cause of sedition whereof we spake; which is, want and poverty in the estate.* To which purpose serveth, the opening and well-balancing of trade; the cherishing of manufactures; the banishing of idleness; the repressing of waste and excess by sumptuary laws;²⁹ the improvement and husbanding* of the soil; the regulating of prices of things vendible;* the moderating of taxes and tributes,* and the like. Generally, it is to be foreseen that the population of a kingdom (especially if it be not mown down by wars) do

²⁴ Pliny, *Epist.* viii.17: 'There is an end to suffering, but not to fearing.'

²⁵ Synonymous: 'efficient causes'.

²⁶ Any alteration to established rituals or beliefs in the period 1520 to 1690 was (rightly) feared as likely to create disturbances.

²⁷ Grievances arising out of the success of foreigners in trade.

²⁸ Individual discretion, no general rule.

²⁹ Laws against extravagance in dress and behaviour.

not exceed the stock* of the kingdom which should maintain them. Neither is the population to be reckoned only by number; for a smaller number that spend more and earn less, do wear out an estate sooner than a greater number that live lower and gather more.³⁰ Therefore the multiplying of nobility³¹ and other degrees of quality in an overproportion to the common people, doth speedily bring a state to necessity; and so doth likewise an overgrown clergy; for they bring nothing to the stock; and in like manner, when more are bred* scholars than preferments* can take* off.

It is likewise to be remembered, that forasmuch as the increase of any estate must be upon the foreigner³² (for whatsoever is somewhere gotten is somewhere lost),³³ there be but three things which one nation selleth unto another: the commodity* as nature yieldeth it; the manufacture; and the vecture,* or carriage. So that if these three wheels* go, wealth will flow as in a spring tide.³⁴ And it cometh many times to pass, that 'materiam superabit opus',³⁵ that the work and carriage is more worth than the material, and enricheth a state more; as is notably seen in the Low-Countrymen, who have the best mines above ground³⁶ in the world.

Above all things, good policy is to be used that the treasure and monies in a state be not gathered into few hands. For otherwise a state may have a great stock, and yet starve. And money is like muck,* not good except it be spread. This is done chiefly by suppressing, or at the least keeping a strait* hand upon the devouring trades of usury, ingrossing,³⁷ great pasturages,³⁸ and the like.

³⁰ Satisfied with a lower level of subsistence, such people save more.

³¹ The vast increase in numbers of the aristocracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries created many social problems.

³² For the benefit of foreign trading-partners (or 'at the expense of').

³³ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* i.10, 1258b 1-2, and Montaigne, *Essays* i.22, 'Le Profit de l'un est dommage de l'autre.'

³⁴ Abundantly (as tides are fullest at the new moon).

³⁵ Ovid, *Met.* ii.5: 'The workmanship will surpass the material.'

³⁶ The Dutch, despite their lack of raw materials, were celebrated for their industry both in manufacturing and in transportation, which became as profitable as gold mines.

³⁷ Monopolizing, buying 'in the gross' in order to corner the market. Many statutes were passed in the sixteenth century forbidding buying in order to resell, but they failed to prevent the practice.

³⁸ Enclosures, by which small farmers were denied use of common agricultural land, which was fenced off for sheep pastures to support the increasingly profitable export trade in wool. Cf. *Henry VII*, p. 65. Bacon brought a bill into the 1597 parliament against the depopulation caused by enclosures: *S*, ix.82.

For removing discontentments, or at least the danger of them; there is in every state (as we know) two portions of subjects; the nobless and the commonalty. When one of these is discontent, the danger is not great; for common people are of slow motion, if they be not excited by the greater sort; and the greater sort are of small strength, except the multitude be apt and ready to move of themselves. Then is the danger, when the greater sort do but wait for the troubling of the waters³⁹ amongst the meaner, that then they may declare themselves.⁴⁰ The poets⁴¹ feign, that the rest of the gods would have bound Jupiter; which he hearing of, by the counsel of Pallas, sent for Briareus, with his hundred hands, to come in to his aid. An emblem, no doubt, to show how safe* it is for monarchs to make sure of the good will of common people.

To give moderate liberty for griefs and discontentments to evaporate (so it be without too great insolency or bravery),* is a safe way. For he that turneth the humours back,⁴² and maketh the wound bleed inwards, endangereth* malign ulcers and pernicious imposthumations.⁴³

The part* of Epimetheus might well become* Prometheus,⁴⁴ in the case of discontentments; for there is not a better provision* against them. Epimetheus, when griefs and evils flew abroad, at last shut the lid, and kept hope in the bottom of the vessel. Certainly, the politic and artificial* nourishing and entertaining of hopes, and carrying men from hopes to hopes, is one of the best antidotes against the poison of discontentments. And it is a certain sign of a wise government and proceeding, when it can hold men's hearts by hopes, when it cannot by satisfaction; and when it can handle things in such manner, as no evil shall appear so peremptory* but that it hath some outlet of hope: which is the less hard to do, because both particular persons and factions are apt enough to flatter themselves, or at least to brave* that, which they believe not.

³⁹ As in the pool of Bethesda, which could cure paralytics: John 5: 2ff.

⁴⁰ Disclose their grievances.

⁴¹ Homer, *Iliad* i.396-406 (where in fact it is Thetis, not Pallas, who sent for Briareus).

⁴² Obstructs, preventing the fluid (e.g. blood) from escaping.

⁴³ Risks producing malignant tumours.

⁴⁴ Epimetheus is after-thought, Prometheus fore-thought. In this version of the fable Jupiter takes revenge for Prometheus' gift of fire to the human race by creating Pandora with her box or jar of calamities, which Epimetheus opens. Cf. Bacon's *De Sapientia Veterum*, ch. 26 (S, vi.745ff).

Also the foresight and prevention, that there be no likely or fit head* whereunto discontented persons may resort, and under whom they may join, is a known, but an excellent point of caution. I understand a fit head to be one that hath greatness⁴⁵ and reputation; that hath confidence with the discontented party, and upon whom they turn their eyes; and that is thought discontented in his own particular.⁴⁶ which kind of persons are either to be won and reconciled to the state, and that in a fast* and true manner; or to be fronted* with some other of the same party, that may oppose them, and so divide the reputation. Generally, the dividing and breaking of all factions and combinations* that are adverse to the state, and setting them at distance,* or at least distrust, amongst themselves, is not one of the worst remedies. For it is a desperate case, if those that hold with the proceeding of the state be full of discord and faction, and those that are against it be entire and united.

I have noted that some witty and sharp* speeches which have fallen from princes have given fire to seditions. Caesar did himself infinite hurt in that speech, 'Sulla nescivit literas, non potuit dictare':⁴⁷ for it did utterly cut off that hope which men had entertained, that he would at one time or other give over his dictatorship. Galba undid himself by that speech, 'legi a se militem, non emi';⁴⁸ for it put the soldiers out of hope of the donative.* Probus likewise, by that speech, 'si vixero, non opus erit amplius Romano imperio militibus';⁴⁹ a speech of great despair for the soldiers. And many the like. Surely princes had need, in tender* matters and ticklish* times, to beware what they say; especially in these short speeches, which fly abroad like darts,* and are thought to be shot out of their secret intentions. For as for large discourses, they are flat* things, and not so much noted.

Lastly, let princes, against all events, not be without some great person, one or rather more, of military valour, near unto them, for the repressing of seditions in their beginnings. For without that, there useth to be more trepidation* in court upon the first breaking

⁴⁵ High standing in society.

⁴⁶ Personal concerns.

⁴⁷ Suetonius, *Caesar* 77: 'Sulla did not know his letters, he could not dictate' (with a pun on 'act the dictator').

⁴⁸ Tacitus, *Histories* i.5: 'I selected my soldiers, and did not buy them.'

⁴⁹ Flavius Vopiscus, *Script. Hist. Aug.* xx.20: 'If I live, the Roman empire shall have no more need of soldiers.'

out of troubles than were fit. And the state runneth the danger of that which Tacitus saith: 'Atque is habitus animorum fuit, ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur.'⁵⁰ But let such military persons be assured,* and well reputed of, rather than factious and popular*; holding also good correspondence⁵¹ with the other great men in the state; or else the remedy is worse than the disease.

⁵⁰ *Histories* i.28: 'And such was the condition of their minds, that a few dared the vilest deeds, more desired them, all permitted them.'

⁵¹ Bearing a proportion, corresponding.

Of Empire¹

It is a miserable state of mind to have few things to desire, and many things to fear; and yet that commonly is the case of kings; who, being at the highest, want* matter of desire, which makes their minds more languishing;* and have many representations² of perils and shadows, which makes their minds the less clear. And this is one reason also of that effect* which the Scripture speaketh of, that 'the king's heart is inscrutable'.³ For multitude of jealousies,* and lack of some predominant desire that should marshal and put in order all the rest, maketh any man's heart hard to find or sound.* Hence it comes likewise, that princes many times make themselves desires, and set their hearts upon toys;* sometimes upon a building; sometimes upon erecting of an order;⁴ sometimes upon the advancing* of a person; sometimes upon obtaining excellency in some art or feat of the hand; as Nero⁵ for playing on the harp, Domitian⁶ for certainty of the hand with the arrow, Commodus⁷ for playing at fence, Caracalla⁸ for driving chariots, and the like. This seemeth incredible unto those that know not the principle that 'the mind of man is more cheered and refreshed by profiting in small things, than by standing at a stay⁹ in great'. We see also that kings that have been fortunate conquerors in their first years, it being not possible for them to go forward infinitely, but that they must have some check* or arrest in their fortunes, turn in their latter years to be superstitious and melancholy; as did Alexander the Great;¹⁰ Diocletian;¹¹ and in our memory, Charles the Fifth;¹² and others.

¹ Rule, especially by a King or Emperor.

² Imaginations, delusions; in the Latin version, 'phantasmata'. In his *History* Bacon noted that Henry VII suffered from such fears: cf. pp. xxiii f.

³ Prov. 25: 3.

⁴ Establishing a fraternity, especially religious.

⁵ Suetonius, 'Nero' 20; Dio Cassius lxiii.1.

⁶ Suetonius, 'Domitian' 19.

⁷ Aelius Lampidius, *Script. Hist. Aug.* xi.10ff; Herodian i.15ff; Dio Cassius lxxii.10, 22.

⁸ Dio Cassius lxxvii.10, 17.

⁹ Remaining passive, stagnant.

¹⁰ Plutarch, 'Of Isis and Osiris' 466D.

¹¹ Roman emperor AD 284-305, who in fact abdicated because of ill-health rather than melancholy.

¹² Holy Roman Emperor (1519-58) and King of Spain, who abdicated in 1556 in favour of his son, Philip II, and spent the two remaining years of his life in ascetic contemplation.

For he that is used to go forward, and findeth a stop,* falleth out of his own favour, and is not the thing he was.

To speak now of the true temper¹³ of empire; it is a thing rare and hard to keep; for both temper and distemper¹⁴ consist of contraries. But it is one thing to mingle contraries, another to interchange them. The answer¹⁵ of Apollonius to Vespasian is full of excellent instruction. Vespasian asked him, 'what was Nero's overthrow?' He answered, 'Nero could touch and tune the harp well; but in government sometimes he used to wind the pins* too high, sometimes to let them down too low.' And certain it is that nothing destroyeth authority so much as the unequal and untimely interchange of power pressed too far, and relaxed too much.

This is true, that the wisdom¹⁶ of all these latter times in princes' affairs is rather fine* deliveries¹⁷ and shiftings¹⁸ of dangers and mischiefs when they are near, than solid and grounded courses to keep them aloof. But this is but to try masteries¹⁹ with fortune. And let men beware how they neglect and suffer matter of trouble to be prepared; for no man can forbid* the spark, nor tell whence it may come. The difficulties in princes' business are many and great; but the greatest difficulty is often in their own mind. For it is common with princes (saith Tacitus) to will* contradictories: 'Sunt plerumque regum voluntates vehementes, et inter se contrariae.'²⁰ For it is the solecism²¹ of power, to think to command the end, and yet not to endure the mean.*

Kings have to deal with their neighbours, their wives, their children, their prelates or clergy, their nobles, their second-nobles* or gentlemen, their merchants, their commons, and their men of war; and from all these arise dangers, if care and circumspection be not used.

First for their neighbours: there can no general rule be given (the occasions are so variable), save one, which ever holdeth; which is,

¹³ Mixture, temperament: mingling the constituent parts into one balanced whole.

¹⁴ Disorder, alteration; interchanging contraries without mingling them.

¹⁵ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* v.28.

¹⁶ Art (of government).

¹⁷ Means of escape from difficulties.

¹⁸ Subterfuges (to avoid danger).

¹⁹ Compete with, as to who shall be master.

²⁰ In fact Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* cxiii.1: 'The desires of kings are commonly vehement and contradictory.'

²¹ Lack of congruence, violating the norms (of syntax; or government).

that princes do keep due sentinel, that none of their neighbours do overgrow so (by increase of territory, by embracing* of trade, by approaches,²² or the like), as they become more able to annoy them than they were. And this is generally the work of standing counsels to foresee and to hinder it. During that triumvirate of kings,²³ King Henry the Eighth of England, Francis the First King of France, and Charles the Fifth Emperor, there was such a watch kept, that none of the three could win a palm of ground, but the other two would straightways balance it, either by confederation, or, if need were, by a war; and would not in any wise take up peace at interest.²⁴ And the like was done by that league²⁵ (which Guicciardini saith was the security of Italy) made between Ferdinando King of Naples, Lorenzious Medices, and Ludovicus Sforza, potentates, the one of Florence, the other of Milan. Neither is the opinion of some of the schoolmen²⁶ to be received, that 'a war cannot justly be made but upon a precedent injury or provocation'. For there is no question but a just fear of an imminent danger, though there be no blow given, is a lawful cause of a war.

For their wives: there are cruel examples of them. Livia is infamed²⁷ for the poisoning of her husband;²⁸ Roxolana, Solyman's wife, was the destruction²⁹ of that renowned prince Sultan Mustapha, and otherwise³⁰ troubled his house and succession; Edward the Second of England his Queen³¹ had the principal hand in the deposing and murder of her husband. This kind of danger is then to be feared chiefly, when the wives have plots for the raising* of their own children; or else that they be advoutresses.*

²² Massing forces on the frontier

²³ Between 1519 and 1556. Bacon re-uses here his discussion of the balance of power from 'Considerations Touching a War with Spain' of 1624: cf. *S*, xiv.469-505, especially 477, and V. Luciani, 'Bacon and Guicciardini', *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 62 (1947), 96-113, at 104-7

²⁴ Accept ('borrow') a present peace at the cost of future loss.

²⁵ Made in 1480; Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia* i.1.

²⁶ Cf. *S*, xiv.477-8, quoting Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Secunda Secundae, Quaest.xi. Artic.1.

²⁷ Infamous. Cf. Tacitus, *Annals* iv.3.

²⁸ Augustus, with poisoned figs cf. Dio Cassius, lvi.30

²⁹ In 1553, to favour her own son.

³⁰ In other ways. Roxolana supported Bajazet her younger son against his elder brother Selymus.

³¹ Isabella. See, e.g., Marlowe's *Edward II*.

For their children: the tragedies likewise of dangers from them have been many. And generally, the entering of fathers into suspicion of their children hath been ever unfortunate. The destruction of Mustapha (that we named before) was so fatal to Solyman's line,* as the succession* of the Turks from Solyman until this day is suspected to be untrue, and of strange³² blood; for that Selymus the Second was thought to be suppositious.* The destruction of Crispus,³³ a young prince of rare towardness,* by Constantinus the Great, his father, was in like manner fatal to his house;* for both Constantinus and Constance, his sons, died violent deaths; and Constantius, his other son, did little better; who died indeed of sickness, but after that Julianus had taken arms against him. The destruction of Demetrius,³⁴ son to Philip the Second³⁵ of Macedon, turned upon the father, who died of repentance. And many like examples there are; but few or none where the fathers had good by such distrust; except it were where the sons were up in open arms against them; as was Selymus the First³⁶ against Bajazet; and the three sons³⁷ of Henry the Second, King of England.

For their prelates: when they are proud and great, there is also danger from them; as it was in the times of Anselmus³⁸ and Thomas Becket,³⁹ Archbishops of Canterbury; who with their crosiers did almost try it with the king's sword; and yet they had to deal with stout* and haughty kings; William Rufus, Henry the First, and Henry the Second. The danger is not from that state,⁴⁰ but where it hath a dependance of foreign authority;⁴¹ or where the churchmen come in and are elected, not by the collation⁴² of the king, or particular patrons, but by the people.

³² Impure, 'not of one's kin or family' (SOED).

³³ Executed in AD 326, at the instigation of his stepmother Fausta, Constantine's second wife.

³⁴ Falsely accused by his brother Perseus, and executed by his father, 179 BC; Livy, *History* xl.24, insists on his innocence.

³⁵ In fact, the Fifth: Livy, xl.54-6

³⁶ Who had his father poisoned by his own physician.

³⁷ Who openly rebelled against their father between 1173 and 1189.

³⁸ St Anselm, appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093, and who clashed with two Kings.

³⁹ Murdered by four of King Henry II's knights in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170.

⁴⁰ Estate of the realm (here: the clergy).

⁴¹ Depends on a foreign power (i.e., the Pope).

⁴² The presentation of a clergyman to a benefice.

For their nobles: to keep them at a distance, it is not amiss; but to depress* them, may make a king more absolute, but less safe; and less able to perform any thing that he desires. I have noted⁴³ it in my History of King Henry the Seventh of England, who depressed his nobility; whereupon it came to pass that his times were full of difficulties and troubles; for the nobility, though they continued* loyal unto him, yet did they not co-operate with him in his business. So that in effect he was fain to do all things himself.

For their second nobles: there is not much danger from them, being a body dispersed. They may sometimes discourse high, but that doth little hurt; besides, they are a counterpoise to the higher nobility, that they grow not too potent; and, lastly, being the most immediate in authority with the common people, they do best temper* popular commotions.

For their merchants: they are *vena porta*;⁴⁴ and if they flourish not, a kingdom may have good limbs, but will have empty veins, and nourish little. Taxes and imposts* upon them do seldom good to the king's revenue; for that that he wins in the hundred⁴⁵ he leese in the shire;⁴⁶ the particular rates* being increased, but the total bulk of trading rather decreased.

For their commons:* there is little danger from them, except it be where they have great and potent heads,* or where you meddle with the point of religion, or their customs,* or means of life.

For their men of war: it is a dangerous state* where they live and remain in a body, and are used to donatives;* whereof we see examples in the janizaries,⁴⁷ and pretorian bands⁴⁸ of Rome; but trainings of men, and arming them in several places, and under several commanders, and without donatives, are things of defence, and no danger.

⁴³ See *Henry VII*, pp. 102, 201, 212.

⁴⁴ The gate-vein, a large vein which was thought to distribute chyle to the liver: similarly, the merchants concentrate the resources of a country in order to redistribute them. Cf. *Henry VII*, p. 133.

⁴⁵ A division of a county in England originally supposed to consist of a hundred families.

⁴⁶ Gains in a small matter but loses in a larger.

⁴⁷ An elite Turkish corps, formed in 1326. Bacon's source here and elsewhere is Richard Knolles, *The generall historie of the Turks* (1603).

⁴⁸ Originally an imperial bodyguard, instituted by Augustus.

Princes are like to heavenly bodies, which cause good or evil times, and which have much veneration, but no rest.⁴⁹ All precepts concerning kings are in effect comprehended in those two remembrances; 'memento quod es homo'; and 'memento quod es Deus', or 'vice Dei';⁵⁰ the one bridleth their power, and the other their will.*

⁴⁹ Cf. Seneca, *Consolatio ad Polybium* vii. 3. 'On the day that Caesar dedicated himself to the wide world, he robbed himself of himself, and even as the planets, which, unresting ever pursue their courses, he may never halt or do anything for himself.'

⁵⁰ 'Remember that you are a man'; 'Remember that you are a God', or 'God's lieutenant'.

Of Counsel

The greatest trust between man and man is the trust of giving counsel. For in other¹ confidences men commit the parts of life; their lands, their goods, their child, their credit, some particular affair; but to such as they make their counsellors, they commit the whole: by how much the more they² are obliged to all faith and integrity. The wisest princes need not think it any diminution to their greatness, or derogation* to their sufficiency,* to rely upon counsel. God himself is not without, but hath made it one of the great names* of his blessed Son; The Counsellor.³ Salomon⁴ hath pronounced that 'in counsel is stability'. Things will have their first or second agitation:* if they be not tossed upon the arguments of counsel, they will be tossed upon the waves of fortune; and be full of inconstancy, doing and undoing, like the reeling* of a drunken man. Salomon's son⁵ found the force of counsel, as his father saw the necessity of it. For the beloved kingdom of God was first rent and broken by ill counsel;* upon which counsel there are set for our instruction the two marks whereby bad counsel is for ever best discerned; that it was young counsel, for the persons; and violent counsel, for the matter.

The ancient times do set forth in figure⁶ both the incorporation and inseparable conjunction of counsel with kings, and the wise and politic use of counsel by kings: the one, in that they say Jupiter did marry Metis, which signifieth counsel; whereby they intend* that Sovereignty is married to Counsel: the other in that which followeth, which was thus: They say, after Jupiter was married to Metis, she conceived by him and was with child, but Jupiter suffered her not to stay till she brought forth, but ate her up; whereby he became himself with child, and was delivered of Pallas armed,⁷ out of his

¹ Dealing with stewards, tutors, agents, financial advisers.

² The counsellors.

³ Isa 9: 6.

⁴ Prov. 20: 18 (paraphrased).

⁵ In 1 Kings 12: 1-19 Rehoboam rejects the advice of his father's counsellors to be lenient to the Israelites, who rebel at his harshness.

⁶ Emblematically.

⁷ Dressed in armour.

head.⁸ Which monstrous* fable containeth a secret of empire; how kings are to make use of their council of state.⁹ That first they ought to refer matters unto them, which is the first begetting or impregnation; but when they are elaborate,* moulded, and shaped in the womb of their counsel, and grow ripe and ready to be brought forth, that then they suffer not their council to go through with the resolution and direction,* as if it depended on them; but take the matter back into their own hands, and make it appear to the world that the decrees and final directions (which, because they come forth with prudence and power, are resembled to Pallas armed) proceeded from themselves; and not only from their authority, but (the more to add reputation to themselves) from their head and device.¹⁰ Let us now speak of the inconveniences of counsel, and of the remedies. The inconveniences that have been noted in calling* and using counsel, are three. First, the revealing of affairs, whereby they become less secret. Secondly, the weakening of the authority of princes, as if they were less of themselves.¹¹ Thirdly, the danger of being unfaithfully counselled, and more for the good of them that counsel than of him that is counselled. For which inconveniences, the doctrine of Italy, and practice of France, in some kings' times, hath introduced cabinet councils;¹² a remedy worse than the disease.

As to secrecy; princes are not bound to communicate all matters with all counsellors; but may extract and select. Neither is it necessary that he that consulteth what he should do, should declare what he will do. But let princes beware that the unsecreting* of their affairs comes not from themselves. And as for cabinet councils, it may be their motto, 'plenus rimarum sum':¹³ one futile* person that maketh it his glory to tell, will do more hurt than many that know

⁸ According to Hesiod (*Theogony* 886–900) Metis is 'counsel' and Pallas Athena 'wisdom'. Cf. *De Sapientia Veterum*, ch. 30, 'Metis; or Counsel' (*S*, vi 761–2).

⁹ The King's main advisory body (the Privy Council in Britain)

¹⁰ Brain and ingenuity.

¹¹ Less capable.

¹² Secret councils, held in 'cabinets' (private apartments), often of *ad hoc* advisors, 'recommended chiefly by flattery and affection', as Bacon put it in a manuscript draft which he did not publish (Michael Kiernan, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* (Oxford, 1985), p. 216). For other contemporary disapproval of this innovation see Mario Melchionda, *Gli 'Essayes' di Francis Bacon* (Florence, 1979), p. 485.

¹³ 'I am full of cracks': Terence, *Eunuchus* i.2.23–5 (cf. the contemporary term, 'to leak' a confidential matter)

it their duty to conceal. It is true there be some affairs which require extreme secrecy, which will hardly go beyond one or two persons¹⁴ besides the king: neither are those counsels unprosperous; for, besides the secrecy, they commonly go on constantly in one spirit of direction, without distraction. But then it must be a prudent king, such as is able to grind with a hand-mill;¹⁵ and those inward* counsellors had need also be wise men, and especially true and trusty to the king's ends; as it was with King Henry the Seventh of England, who in his greatest business imparted himself to none, except it were to Morton and Fox.¹⁶

For weakening of authority; the fable¹⁷ showeth the remedy. Nay, the majesty of kings is rather exalted than diminished when they are in the chair of council; neither was there ever prince bereaved of his dependances¹⁸ by his council; except where there hath been either an over-greatness in one counsellor or an over-strict combination in divers;¹⁹ which are things soon found and holpen.*

For the last inconvenience, that men will counsel with an eye to themselves; certainly, 'non inveniet fidem super terram'²⁰ is meant of the nature of times,* and not of all particular persons. There be²¹ that are in nature faithful, and sincere, and plain, and direct; not crafty and involved;* let princes, above all, draw to themselves such natures. Besides, counsellors are not commonly so united, but that one counsellor keepeth sentinel over another; so that if any do counsel out of faction or private ends, it commonly comes to the king's ear. But the best remedy is, if princes know their counsellors, as well as their counsellors know them:

Principis est virtus maxima nosse suos.²²

And on the other side, counsellors should not be too speculative* into their sovereign's person. The true composition of a counsellor

¹⁴ Not more than one or two people should know the secret.

¹⁵ Manage affairs himself without helpers.

¹⁶ Cf. *Henry VII*, pp. 19, 63, 165.

¹⁷ Of Metis and Jupiter above. Kings should call back the fruits of counsel, which they own as children.

¹⁸ Deprived of his dependencies, and so power.

¹⁹ Excessive power in one, or a rigorous alliance between several.

²⁰ 'He will not find faith on the earth'. Luke 18. 8.

²¹ There are some people.

²² 'It is a ruler's greatest excellence to know his subjects': Martial, *Epigrams* viii 15.8.

is rather to be skilful in their master's business, than in his nature; for then he is like to advise him, and not feed his humour.²³ It is of singular use to princes if they take the opinions of their council both separately and together. For private opinion is more free; but opinion before others is more reverent.* In private, men are more bold in their own humours; and in consort, men are more obnoxious* to others' humours; therefore it is good to take both; and of the inferior sort²⁴ rather in private, to preserve freedom; of the greater rather in consort, to preserve respect. It is in vain for princes to take counsel concerning matters,* if they take no counsel likewise concerning persons; for all matters are as dead images; and the life* of the execution of affairs resteth in the good choice of persons. Neither is it enough to consult concerning persons *secundum genera*,²⁵ as in an idea,* or mathematical description, what the kind and character of the person should be; for the greatest errors are committed, and the most judgement is shown, in the choice of individuals. It was truly said, 'optimi consilarii mortui';²⁶ books will speak plain when counsellors blanch.* Therefore it is good to be conversant in them, specially the books of such as themselves have been actors upon the stage.

The councils at this day in most places are but familiar meetings, where matters are rather talked on²⁷ than debated. And they run too swift to the order or act of council.²⁸ It were better that in causes of weight, the matter were propounded one day and not spoken to till the next day; 'in nocte consilium'.²⁹ So was it done in the Commission of Union³⁰ between England and Scotland; which was a grave and orderly assembly. I commend set* days for petitions; for both it gives the suitors more certainty for their attendance, and it

²³ Indulge his whims.

²⁴ Of lower social standing.

²⁵ Generally, according to types.

²⁶ 'The best counsellors are the dead' (a saying of Alphonso of Aragon, 1416-58).

²⁷ Gossiped about.

²⁸ Decree to be put into action

²⁹ 'Night is the season for counsel', a proverb (found in Erasmus' *Adagia* and elsewhere).

³⁰ In 1604 a committee was formed to discuss the implications of uniting the Kingdoms of England and Scotland. Bacon had written a detailed memorandum on the issue in 1603, 'A Brief Discourse touching the happy union of the Kingdoms of England and Scotland' (S, x 90-99, 241).

frees the meetings for matters of estate,* that they may 'hoc agere'.³¹ In choice of committees for ripening business for the council, it is better to choose indifferent* persons, than to make an indifferency³² by putting in those that are strong on both sides. I commend also standing commissions;³³ as for trade, for treasure, for war, for suits,* for some provinces; for where there be divers particular councils and but one council of estate (as it is in Spain), they are, in effect, no more than standing commissions: save that they have greater authority. Let such as are to inform councils out of their particular professions (as lawyers, seamen, mintmen,* and the like), be first heard before committees; and then, as occasion serves, before the council. And let them not come in multitudes, or in a tribunitious³⁴ manner; for that is to clamour* councils, not to inform them. A long table and a square table, or seats about the walls, seem things of form, but are things of substance; for at a long table a few at the upper end,³⁵ in effect, sway all the business; but in the other form there is more use of the counsellors' opinions that sit lower. A king, when he presides in council, let him beware how he opens his own inclination too much in that which he propoundeth; for else counsellors will but take the wind of him,³⁶ and instead of giving free counsel, sing him a song of Placebo.³⁷

³¹ 'Do this', or 'Mind this', i.e. 'concentrate on the business in hand'. Cf. Plutarch, 'Life' of Coriolanus 25.

³² Balance (and possibly stalemate)

³³ Permanent committees.

³⁴ Violent, turbulent, like the Tribunes in early Rome (cf. Livy, iii 19, iv.2; Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*).

³⁵ With the president at the end of a table, those counsellors near him can 'sway' or control business.

³⁶ Gain the advantage.

³⁷ 'I shall please you.' The opening words of the Vesper hymn for the dead (Ps. 116: 9, in the Vulgate: 'Placebo domino in regione vivorum'), here used to mock flatterers and timeservers who tell their superior what he wants to hear.

Of the True Greatness¹ of Kingdoms and Estates²

The speech³ of Themistocles the Athenian, which was haughty and arrogant in taking so much to himself, had been a grave and wise observation and censure,* applied at large* to others. Desired at a feast to touch a lute, he said, 'He could not fiddle,⁴ but yet he could make a small town a great city.' These words (holpen* a little with a metaphor)⁵ may express two differing abilities in those that deal in business of estate.* For if a true survey be taken of counsellors and statesmen, there may be found (though rarely) those which can make a small state great, and yet cannot fiddle: as on the other side, there will be found a great many that can fiddle very cunningly, but yet are so far from being able to make a small state great, as their gift lieth the other way; to bring a great and flourishing estate to ruin and decay. And, certainly those degenerate arts and shifts,⁶ whereby many counsellors and governors gain both favour with their masters and estimation with the vulgar, deserve no better name than fiddling; being things rather pleasing for the time, and graceful to themselves only, than tending to the weal* and advancement of the state which they serve. There are also (no doubt) coun-

¹ Bacon first set down his ideas on this topic in a speech delivered to the House of Commons in February 1607, and further developed in a treatise 'Of the True Greatness of the Kingdom of Britain' (*S*, vii.39-40, 47-64), planned and written in 1608 (*S*, xi.73-4) but not published until 1734. An earlier (less warlike) version was included in the 1612 *Essays*, (*S*, vi. 587-8). The revised and expanded English text first appeared in a Latin translation in the *De Augmentis* (viii, 3), with the title *De proferendis Imperii finibus*, 'Of extending the bounds of Empire' (*S*, 1.793-802; English translation v.79-88). The 'true greatness' in the English title, as the second paragraph makes clear, means 'expansive power', or 'the power and forces' of a state to acquire and hold new territory by warfare, a dynamic activity not employed (or needed?) by large but static states. On other occasions (e.g., *S*, xiii.20) he recommended the pursuit of peace. For a useful study of Bacon's thinking on these issues see Markku Peltonen, 'Politics and science: Francis Bacon and the true greatness of states', *The Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 279-305, also in *Classical humanism and republicanism in English political thought 1570-1640*, ch. 4.

² As Melchionda shows (*Gli 'Essays' di Francis Bacon*, p. 518) this paired phrase, which occurs nineteen times in the *Essays*, means 'Monarchies and Republics', corresponding to the similar terms 'principati e repubbliche', frequently used by Machiavelli.

³ Saying, recorded by Plutarch, 'Life' of Themistocles ii.4.

⁴ Meaning, (a) 'play the instrument', (b) cheat.

⁵ By being transferred to politics (the Latin term for metaphor is *translatio*).

⁶ Skills and tricks.

sellors and governors which may be held sufficient* (*negotii pares*),⁷ able to manage affairs, and to keep them from precipices and manifest inconveniences; which nevertheless are far from the ability to raise and amplify an estate in power, means, and fortune. But be the workmen what they may be, let us speak of the work; that is, the true Greatness* of Kingdoms and Estates, and the means thereof. An argument* fit for great and mighty princes to have in their hand; to the end that neither by over-measuring* their forces, they leese* themselves in vain enterprises; nor on the other side, by undervaluing them, they descend to fearful* and pusillanimous counsels.*

The greatness of an estate in bulk and territory, doth fall under measure;⁸ and the greatness of finances and revenue doth fall under computation. The population may appear⁹ by musters;* and the number and greatness of cities and towns by cards* and maps. But yet there is not anything amongst civil affairs more subject to error, than the right valuation and true judgement concerning the power and forces of an estate. The kingdom of heaven is compared,¹⁰ not to any great kernel or nut, but to a grain of mustard-seed; which is one of the least grains, but hath in it a property and spirit hastily to get up and spread. So are there states great in territory, and yet not apt to enlarge or command; and some that have but a small dimension of stem,¹¹ and yet apt to be the foundations of great monarchies.

Walled towns, stored arsenals and armories,* goodly races* of horse, chariots of war, elephants, ordnance,* artillery,* and the like; all this is but a sheep in a lion's skin,¹² except the breed and disposition of the people be stout* and warlike. Nay, number (itself) in armies importeth* not much, where the people is of weak courage; for (as Virgil¹³ saith) 'It never troubles a wolf how many the sheep be.' The army of the Persians in the plains of Arbela was such a vast sea of people, as it did somewhat astonish the commanders in Alexander's army; who came to him therefore, and wished him to

⁷ Equal to the business, just. Cf. Tacitus, *Annals* vi.39, xvi.18

⁸ Can be measured.

⁹ Be displayed, computed.

¹⁰ In Matt. 13: 31, Mark 4: 30-2.

¹¹ Stalk, bearing leaves; a race or family

¹² Cf. Matt. 7: 15.

¹³ *Eclogues* vii.51-2.

set upon them by night; but he answered,¹⁴ 'He would not pilfer the victory.' And the defeat was easy. When Tigranes the Armenian, being encamped upon a hill with four hundred thousand men, discovered the army of the Romans, being not above fourteen thousand, marching towards him, he made himself merry with it, and said,¹⁵ 'Yonder men are too many for an ambassage,* and too few for a fight.' But, before the sun set, he found them enough to give him the chase with infinite slaughter. Many are the examples of the great odds* between number and courage: so that a man may truly make a judgement, that the principal point of greatness in any state is to have a race of military men.¹⁶ Neither is money the sinews of war (as it is trivially said),¹⁷ where the sinews of men's arms, in base and effeminate people, are failing. For Solon¹⁸ said well to Croesus (when in ostentation he shewed him his gold), 'Sir, if any other come that hath better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold.' Therefore let any prince or state think soberly* of his forces, except his militia¹⁹ of natives be of good and valiant soldiers. And let princes, on the other side, that have subjects of martial disposition, know their own strength; unless they be otherwise wanting unto themselves.²⁰ As for mercenary forces (which is the help* in this case), all examples show that whatsoever estate or prince doth rest²¹ upon them, he may spread* his feathers for a time, but he will mew* them soon after.

The blessing²² of Judah and Issachar will never meet; that 'the same people or nation should be both the lion's whelp and the ass between burthens';²³ neither will it be, that a people overlaid* with

¹⁴ Plutarch, 'Life' of Alexander 31.5

¹⁵ Plutarch, 'Life' of Lucullus 27.4.

¹⁶ Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi* ii.18 and *The Prince* ch. 10.

¹⁷ A classical commonplace (found in Diogenes Laertius, Cicero, Plutarch, Tacitus), which Bacon probably took from Machiavelli: *Discorsi* ii.10. 'Money is not the sinews of war, although it is generally so considered.'

¹⁸ This saying, found in the same passage in Machiavelli, derives from Lucian's dialogue 'Charon'.

¹⁹ Originally 'citizen army' (not professional).

²⁰ Weak for other reasons.

²¹ Rely. On the dangers of relying on mercenaries see *Discorsi* i.43, ii.20, and *The Prince* chs. 12, 13.

²² 'Grace given by God': see Gen. 49: 9, 14.

²³ Loaded down.

taxes should ever become valiant and martial. It is true that taxes levied by consent of the estate* do abate* men's courage less: as it hath been seen notably in the excises²⁴ of the Low Countries; and, in some degree, in the subsidies²⁵ of England. For you must note that we speak now of the heart and not of the purse. So that although the same tribute* and tax, laid by consent or by imposing, be all one to the purse, yet it works diversely upon the courage. So that you may conclude, that no people over-charged with tribute is fit for empire.

Let states that aim at greatness, take heed how their nobility and gentlemen do multiply too fast. For that maketh the common subject grow to be a peasant* and base swain,* driven out of heart, and in effect but the gentleman's labourer. Even as you may see in coppice* woods; if you leave your staddles* too thick, you shall never have clean underwood, but shrubs and bushes. So in countries, if the gentlemen be too many, the commons will be base;²⁶ and you will bring it to that, that not the hundred poll will be fit for an helmet;²⁷ especially as to the infantry, which is the nerve of an army;²⁸ and so there will be great population and little strength. This which I speak of hath been no where better seen than by comparing of England and France; whereof England, though far less in territory and population, hath been (nevertheless) an overmatch; in regard the middle people²⁹ of England make good soldiers, which the peasants of France do not.³⁰ And herein the device of King Henry the Seventh (whereof I have spoken³¹ largely in the history of his life) was profound and admirable; in making farms and houses of husbandry* of a standard;³² that is, maintained with such a proportion of land unto them, as may breed a subject to live in convenient* plenty and no servile condition; and to keep the

²⁴ Taxes on home commodities, especially food, drink, and clothing, which were as high as 50 per cent in the Low Countries at this time.

²⁵ Contributions to the royal budget voted by parliament.

²⁶ Degraded (morally).

²⁷ Only one man in a hundred fit to be a soldier.

²⁸ Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi* ii.18.

²⁹ Yeomanry (see below, p. 252).

³⁰ Vincent Luciani ('Bacon and Machiavelli', *Italica* 24 (1947), 26-40, at p. 30) cites Machiavelli's *Ritratto di cose di Francia* for this judgement.

³¹ See *Henry VII*, pp. 65-7.

³² Up to a reasonable standard, proportional to their undertakings.

plough in the hands of the owners, and not mere hirelings.³³ And thus indeed you shall attain to Virgil's character* which he gives to ancient Italy:

Terra potens armis atque ubere glebae.³⁴

Neither is that state* (which, for anything I know, is almost peculiar to England, and hardly to be found anywhere else, except it be perhaps in Poland) to be passed over; I mean the state of free servants³⁵ and attendants upon noblemen and gentlemen; which are no ways inferior unto the yeomanry³⁶ for arms. And therefore out of all question, the splendour and magnificence and great retinues and hospitality of noblemen and gentlemen, received into custom, doth much conduce unto martial greatness. Whereas, contrariwise, the close and reserved living of noblemen and gentlemen causeth penury of military forces.

By all means it is to be procured, that the trunk of Nebuchadnezzar's tree³⁷ of monarchy be great enough to bear the branches and the boughs;³⁸ that is, that the natural* subjects of the crown or state bear a sufficient proportion to the stranger* subjects that they govern. Therefore all states that are liberal of naturalization towards strangers are fit for empire.³⁹ For to think that an handful of people can, with the greatest courage and policy in the world, embrace too large extent of dominion, it may hold for a time, but it will fail suddenly. The Spartans were a nice⁴⁰ people in point of naturaliz-

³³ Hired labourers. Bacon is referring to current economic conditions: 'while the cost of living rose by about 80 per cent between 1550 and 1600, wages had risen by only 50 per cent. At the same time the expanding population, and the necessity for landlords to exploit their estates more efficiently, were multiplying the numbers of the rural poor . . . Outright depopulation was not common, but the numbers of cottages and wage labourers increased; and they tended to become poorer as those with secure tenures or long leases flourished': D. M. Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, pp. 344-5.

³⁴ *Aeneid* i.531, 'A land powerful in arms and richness of soil.'

³⁵ As Melchionda makes clear (*Gli 'Essays' di Francis Bacon*, p. 524), these are paid servants wearing livery supplied by their masters, a practice which Bacon condemned in *Henry VII*, pp. 177-8.

³⁶ Farmers owning their land, ranking one grade below gentlemen, and who often served in the army as foot-soldiers.

³⁷ Dan. 4: 10-26.

³⁸ Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi* ii.3, and *S*, x.96.

³⁹ Able to expand.

⁴⁰ Fastidious, particular. Cf. Machiavelli, *Discorsi* i.6.

ation; whereby, while they kept their compass, they stood firm; but when they did spread, and their boughs were becomen too great for their stem, they became a windfall⁴¹ upon the sudden. Never any state was in this point so open to receive strangers into their body as were the Romans. Therefore it sorted* with them accordingly; for they grew to the greatest monarchy.⁴² Their manner was to grant naturalization (which they called *jus civitatis*),⁴³ and to grant it in the highest degree; that is, not only *jus commercii*, *jus connubii*, *jus haereditatis*; but also *jus suffragii*, and *jus honorum*.⁴⁴ And this not to singular* persons alone, but likewise to whole families; yea to cities, and sometimes to nations. Add to this their custom of plantation of colonies;⁴⁵ whereby the Roman plant was removed into the soil of other nations. And putting both constitutions⁴⁶ together, you will say that it was not the Romans that spread upon the world, but it was the world that spread upon the Romans; and that was the sure way of greatness. I have marvelled sometimes at Spain, how they clasp and contain* so large dominions with so few natural* Spaniards; but sure the whole compass of Spain is a very great body of a tree; far above Rome and Sparta at the first.⁴⁷ And besides, though they have not had that usage to naturalize liberally, yet they have that which is next to it; that is, to employ almost indifferently all nations in their militia of ordinary soldiers; yea and sometimes in their highest⁴⁸ commands. Nay it seemeth at this instant they are sensible* of this want of natives; as by the Pragmatical Sanction,⁴⁹ now published, appeareth.

It is certain, that sedentary and within-door arts,⁵⁰ and delicate manufactures⁵¹ (that require rather the finger than the arm), have

⁴¹ Anything blown down by the wind.

⁴² In the sense of 'absolute dominion'.

⁴³ Right of citizenship.

⁴⁴ The all-important legal rights of commerce, marriage, receiving property by will, voting, holding office.

⁴⁵ Roman colonies were set up by the state, not by private individuals, and modelled on the government of Rome.

⁴⁶ Institutions (naturalization and colonization).

⁴⁷ At their beginnings.

⁴⁸ Many Spanish generals were foreigners.

⁴⁹ A royal proclamation, issued by Philip IV in 1622, offering tax incentives to those who married and bore many children, especially male.

⁵⁰ Crafts practised in a building or factory.

⁵¹ Skilled occupations.

in their nature a contrariety to a military disposition. And generally, all warlike people are a little idle, and love danger better than travail. Neither must they be too much broken of⁵² it, if they shall be preserved in vigour. Therefore it was great advantage in the ancient states of Sparta, Athens, Rome, and others, that they had the use of slaves, which commonly did rid those manufactures.⁵³ But that is abolished,⁵⁴ in greatest part, by the Christian law. That which cometh nearest to it, is to leave those arts chiefly to strangers (which for that purpose are the more easily to be received),* and to contain* the principal bulk of the vulgar natives⁵⁵ within those three kinds – tillers of the ground; free servants; and handicraftsmen of strong and manly arts, as smiths, masons, carpenters, &c: not reckoning professed⁵⁶ soldiers.

But above all, for empire and greatness, it importeth* most that a nation do profess arms as their principal honour, study, and occupation. For the things which we formerly have spoken of are but habilitations⁵⁷ towards arms; and what is habilitation without intention and act?⁵⁸ Romulus,⁵⁹ after his death (as they report or feign), sent a present⁶⁰ to the Romans, that above all they should intend* arms; and then they should prove the greatest empire of the world. The fabric of the state of Sparta was wholly (though not wisely) framed and composed to that scope and end. The Persians and Macedonians had it for a flash.* The Gauls, Germans, Goths, Saxons, Normans, and others, had it for a time. The Turks have it at this day, though in great declination.* Of Christian Europe, they that have it are, in effect, only the Spaniards. But it is so plain that every man profiteth in that he most intendeth, that it needeth not to be stood* upon. It is enough to point* at it; that no nation which doth not directly* profess arms, may look to have greatness fall into their mouths. And on the other side, it is a most certain oracle of

⁵² Worn out by.

⁵³ Perform those artisanal activities

⁵⁴ Slavery was abolished in Europe in the late medieval period, but persisted in the Americas.

⁵⁵ Common citizens.

⁵⁶ Having as a profession.

⁵⁷ Trainings, means of attaining ability.

⁵⁸ Endeavour, putting into practice.

⁵⁹ See Plutarch, 'Life' of Romulus 28; Livy i.16.6–8.

⁶⁰ Bequeathed (the advice to become soldiers).

time,⁶¹ that those states that continue long in that profession (as the Romans and Turks principally have done) do wonders. And those that have professed arms but for an age, have notwithstanding commonly attained that greatness in that age which maintained them long after, when their profession and exercise of arms hath grown to decay.

Incident to this point is, for a state to have those laws or customs which may reach forth unto them just occasions (as may be pretended) of war. For there is that justice imprinted in the nature of men, that they enter not upon wars (whereof so many calamities do ensue) but upon some, at the least specious,* grounds and quarrels. The Turk hath at hand, for cause of war, the propagation of his law or sect;⁶² a quarrel that he may always command. The Romans, though they esteemed the extending the limits of their empire to be great honour to their generals when it was done, yet they never rested upon that alone to begin a war. First therefore, let nations that pretend* to greatness have this; that they be sensible* of wrongs, either upon borderers,⁶³ merchants, or politique ministers;⁶⁴ and that they sit not too long upon a provocation. Secondly, let them be prest* and ready to give aids and succours to their confederates; as it ever was with the Romans; insomuch as, if the confederates had leagues defensive with divers other states, and, upon invasion offered, did implore their aids severally,* yet the Romans would ever be the foremost, and leave it to none other to have the honour. As for the wars which were anciently made on the behalf of a kind of party,* or tacit conformity⁶⁵ of estate, I do not see how they may be well justified: as when the Romans⁶⁶ made a war for the liberty of Graecia; or when the Lacedaemonians and Athenians⁶⁷ made wars to set up or pull down democracies and oligarchies; or when wars were made by foreigners, under the pretence of justice or protection, to deliver the subjects of others from tyranny and oppression; and the like. Let it suffice, that no estate

⁶¹ Prediction proved true by history.

⁶² Religion (Mohammedanism).

⁶³ Who live in one country and work in another.

⁶⁴ Official representatives of the state.

⁶⁵ As if the foreign country had the same political system, which would justify interfering in its internal affairs.

⁶⁶ The second Macedonian war, 200–197 BC. Cf. Livy xxxiii.32–3.

⁶⁷ The Peloponnesian wars. Cf. Thucydides i.19.

expect to be great, that is not awake upon any just occasion of arming.

No body can be healthful without exercise, neither natural body nor politic; and certainly to a kingdom or estate, a just and honourable war is the true exercise. A civil war indeed is like the heat of a fever; but a foreign war is like the heat of exercise, and serveth to keep the body in health; for in a slothful peace,⁶⁸ both courages* will effeminate* and manners corrupt. But howsoever it be for happiness, without all question, for greatness it maketh, to be still for the most part in arms; and the strength of a veteran* army (though it be a chargeable* business) always on foot,⁶⁹ is that which commonly giveth the law,⁷⁰ or at least the reputation, amongst all neighbour states; as may well be seen in Spain, which hath had, in one part or other, a veteran army almost continually, now by the space of six score years.

To be master of the sea is an abridgment⁷¹ of a monarchy. Cicero, writing to Atticus of Pompey his preparation against Caesar, saith 'Consilium Pompeii plane Themistocleum est; putat enim, qui mari potitur, eum rerum potiri.'⁷² And, without doubt, Pompey had tired out Caesar, if upon vain confidence he had not left that way.⁷³ We see the great effects of battles by sea. The battle of Actium⁷⁴ decided the empire of the world. The battle of Lepanto⁷⁵ arrested the greatness of the Turk. There be many examples where sea-fights have been final* to the war; but this is when princes or states have set up their rest⁷⁶ upon the battles. But thus much is certain, that he that commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much and as little of the war as he will.⁷⁷ Whereas those that be strongest

⁶⁸ The idea that peace is dangerous to a country, bringing idleness and diseases, goes back to the ancient Romans, especially Cato and Livy. See, e.g., Brian Vickers, 'Leisure and idleness in the Renaissance: the ambivalence of *otium*', *Renaissance Studies* 4 (1990), 1-37 and 107-54.

⁶⁹ On permanent service.

⁷⁰ The power of arbitrating, the supremacy.

⁷¹ Epitome, a short cut to dominion.

⁷² *Ad Att.* x.8, 'Pompey's plan is quite Themistoclean; for he thinks that the mastery of the sea means the mastery of the war'

⁷³ Given up that course.

⁷⁴ Where the fleet of Augustus defeated Antony's, September 31 BC.

⁷⁵ Where the fleet of the Holy League, led by Don John of Austria, crushed the Turkish fleet in 1571.

⁷⁶ Risked everything (a metaphor from gambling).

⁷⁷ Can give or refuse battle when it suits him.

by land are many times nevertheless in great straits.* Surely, at this day, with us of Europe, the vantage of strength at sea (which is one of the principal dowries of this kingdom of Great Britain) is great; both because most of the kingdoms of Europe are not merely* inland, but girt with the sea most part of their compass;* and because the wealth of both Indies seems in great part but an accessary⁷⁸ to the command of the seas.

The wars of latter ages seem to be made in the dark, in respect of the glory and honour which reflected upon men from the wars in ancient time. There be now, for martial encouragement, some degrees and orders of chivalry, which nevertheless are conferred promiscuously* upon soldiers and no soldiers;⁷⁹ and some remembrance perhaps upon the scutcheon;* and some hospitals⁸⁰ for maimed soldiers; and such like things. But in ancient times, the trophies* erected upon the place of the victory; the funeral laudatives and monuments for those that died in the wars; the crowns and garlands personal;⁸¹ the style of Emperor,⁸² which the great kings of the world after* borrowed; the triumphs of the generals upon their return; the great donatives* and largesses* upon the disbanding of the armies; were things able to inflame all men's courages. But above all, that of the Triumph,⁸³ amongst the Romans, was not pageants or gaudery,* but one of the wisest and noblest institutions that ever was. For it contained three things; honour to the general; riches to the treasury out of the spoils; and donatives to the army. But that honour perhaps were not fit for monarchies; except it be in the person of the monarch himself, or his sons, as it

⁷⁸ A consequence of, dependent.

⁷⁹ Such honorary titles as knighthood, originally conferred for bravery on the battlefield, but subsequently a civic honour which could also be purchased by a payment into the royal coffers. (When Bacon received his knighthood from James I in 1603, he was one of 300 ennobled that day.)

⁸⁰ The earliest hospitals in Europe, founded in the Middle Ages, were for wounded soldiers.

⁸¹ Crowns granted to individuals: the Romans awarded them to soldiers who had saved the lives of their comrades, or first mounted the wall of a besieged town (cf. Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* 1.9.57ff).

⁸² The 'title' of *imperator*, with which Roman soldiers saluted their generals after a victory.

⁸³ A triumphal procession awarded for outstanding victories: an institution that attracted much interest in the Renaissance with the rediscovery of Roman customs, as in the *Trionfi* of Petrarch and the *Triumph of Caesar* by Mantegna, now in Hampton Court, London.

came to pass in the times of the Roman emperors, who did impropriate* the actual triumphs to themselves and their sons, for such wars as they did achieve* in person; and left only, for wars achieved by subjects, some triumphal garments and ensigns* to the general.

To conclude: no man can 'by care taking' (as the Scripture⁸⁴ saith) 'add a cubit to his stature', in this little model of a man's body; but in the great frame of kingdoms and commonwealths, it is in the power of princes or estates to add amplitude and greatness* to their kingdoms; for by introducing such ordinances, constitutions, and customs, as we have now touched, they may sow greatness to their posterity and succession. But these things are commonly not observed,⁸⁵ but left to take their chance.

⁸⁴ Matt. 6: 27; Luke 12: 25.

⁸⁵ As they ought to be, according to Bacon's design for the establishment of a science of politics.

Glossary

abashed disconcerted	admit of acknowledge, accept as true
abate reduce, beat down	advance promote
absolute detached; having unchallenged power; despotic	advancing promotion (as of a court favourite)
absoluteness autonomy, independence	advantage advantageous occasion
abuse n. Imposture; vb. deceive	advertise inform
accept approve of	advertisement report, information
accident event; pl. unfavourable symptoms	advise of consider
accomplish arrive at	advoultry adultery
account of judge	advoutress adultress
achieve carry to successful completion	affable courteous
acquest acquisition	affect be favourably inclined; like; cling to
acquit oneself perform one's part	affectionate loving, in favour of; desirous
acted put into act	affection, in desirous, wishing
address approach	affections passions, emotions
addulce sweeten, soothe	affront face defiantly
admirable remarkable	after afterwards, later
admiration esteem, approbation	against towards, in view of
	agitation motion; debate

agreeable in agreement with, corresponding	apprehensive worried about the future
aid auxiliary	approved celebrated
airs reports, signs	argument topic, subject for consideration; proof
alarum signal calling men to arms	armory deposit of weapons
Alcoran Koran	arraign accuse
allowance permission	articulate adj. explicit
allurement temptation	artificial skilful
Almain Germany	artificially artfully, pretendedly
Almains Germans (also: mercenary soldiers)	artillery any engines of war
aloft victorious	as as if
aloof from a distance	aspect appearance
alteration disturbance	assign appoint
ambassage embassy	assume put on
ambition strong desire	assurance security
amend improve	assured pledged; trustworthy
amongst in	attach n./vb. arrest
amortize transfer permanently	attainder condemnation; sentence of death or outlawry
amuse deceive, delude	attaint accuse, convict, condemn
ancestor predecessor	attemper vb. moderate, calm down
animated inspired	attempt n./vb. attack; aim
annual n. payment	attentate assault
answerable according	avails proceeds
appall discourage, dismay	avowed recognized
appalment disheartening, rendering pallid through fright	
appeach accuse	
appear be involved	
appearance probability, likelihood	bad bade, ordered
appertain belong	bands bonds; companies, troops
apply come into contact	bands of foot regular infantry
apposite suitable, to the point	banneret knight
apprehend feel; make use of; arrest, seize	bark ship
	base illegitimate, bastard

battail battalion	brocage corrupt dealing; bribery
battle body	broken rough
beat inquire into	brook put up with, tolerate
become suit	bruit rumour
before time previously	budget leather bag, wallet
beholding to dependent on	Burgess Member of Parliament for a borough or corporate town
belike probably	business undertaking
benignly kindly	busy meddling
bent humour, inclination	but except
bereave deprive	butcher murderer
beset surround	by near
betrust trusted	by-word saying
better cards better resources	
bewray expose, betray	
bid offer	
blanch whiten, palliate; play down, lessen	caitiff wretch
blandishment gently flattering speech	calamitous grievously afflicted.
blast gust of wind	calling summoning
bleeding extracting	capable able to understand, accept
blustering rowdy	capitulation contract
board vb. make advances to	captious tricky, awkward
boiling in an uproar	carbuncle malignant tumour (anthrax)
bondwoman servant girl	card map or plan; chart
bottom ship	care worry
bound boundary	careful considerate
boutefeu firebrand	caressing treating kindly
bow bend, influence	carriage behaviour
brake forth became known	carried captured
brandle upset	carry manage, arrange; reach
brave boastfully pretend	case offence, cause
bravery boastful defiance; ostentation; show	cast calculate, design, plot
breach rupture, breakdown	casting-counters instruments, pawns
breathe out dwindle away	casual accidental
bred educated	casualties windfalls,
brief missive	
broach spit	

incidental revenues (Latin <i>casualia</i>)	cock-boat a small ship's boat
catching hurried, hasty	cockatrice imaginary animal, supposedly a crossbreed of a cock and a viper, whose look was thought to kill
caught with deceived by	coffer up gather, keep
caul net for covering the head	cognizance badge of a (noble) employer
cause legal case at issue	coin coinage
caveat caution	coldness lack of courage
cavilling making trivial objections	collating comparing
celebrity celebration	colour deception, excuse
censure judgement, opinion	colourable fair-seeming; specious
champaign flat, open land	combination alliance; an association of people for an illegal purpose
change exchange	come in surrender
character characterization	comfort n./vb. aid, support
charge order, attack, burden; accusation	commiserable deserving commiseration, pity
chargeable costly	commitment imprisonment
charges expenses	commodity advantage, benefit, convenience; raw materials, natural produce
check rebuff	commons working classes
chievance usurious transaction	communicate share with others
choice hand-picked	company guild
churchman cleric, ecclesiastic	compass n. boundary; devise; vb. execute
churlish intractable, obstinate	compensated balanced
churmne confused murmuring noise	competent sufficient
cincture enclosure	complice accomplice
clad dressed	compose settle
clamour disturb	composition constitution, treaty; pl. agreed payments
clause order, command	
clear free from obstruction, manifest, unambiguous	
clearness legitimacy	
clerk cleric	
client dependant	
close secretive, reserved	
closely secretly	
closeness secrecy	

compound settle, agree to pay	continue confirm, remain, keep
compounding resolving	contumely insult
comptroller one who checks the accounts of others by a counter-roll	convenient suitable
conceit n. idea, thought; rumour, imagination; vb. think, reason; imagine	convict convicted of capital crimes
conceited imagined; thought, reasoned	coppice woods of small growth for periodic cutting
conceive think	copy model
concern affect, influence	cordial medicine
conclave assembly of the Pope and his councillors	cordwainer shoemaker
conclude negotiate	core, in a in the midst of
concourse support, coming together	corners squadrons (Latin <i>cornu</i> , lit. 'horn', fig. 'wing of an army')
concurrent coming together; contemporary	corroborate strengthen
condition qualities, employments	couch vb. draft
confederate ally	counsel lawyer; pl. proceedings
conference conversation	countenance n. sanction; vb. support, make credible
confident trustworthy, dependable	countermine counterplot
confine imprison	country county, region
confirming strengthening loyalty	courage anger, pride; resolve
confiscation condemnation	course rate of exchange; pl. bouts, encounters; policies
conjunction alliance	courtesy, at by sufferance
consent agreement, sympathy	creation investiture, granting a noble title
consort agreement; company, accord (as in 'concert')	credence credibility
contain comprise; restrain	crow crow-bar
contemplation anticipation	curious careful, choice, precise; occult
contemptible insignificant; despicable, disregarded	customs taxes, imposts
continuance long residence	daintiest exquisite
	damp vb. discourage, stifle, check

danger, in his at his mercy	devotion devoted service, personal disposal
dark secretive	die singular of 'dice'
dark-lights half-lights, unclearly	difficile unmanageable
dart small spear	diffidence distrust
dead unsaleable	diligence device; haste; thoroughness
debonaire gentle, kindly	direct vb. order
declination decline	direction order, course of action
deepest most crafty	directly straightforwardly, absolutely
defacement, in obliterating	dirige dirge, funeral hymn
defection falling away	disabled totally unqualified
defer delay	disagreement refusal
defluxion discharge (of humours)	disannulling annulling
deliberation reflection, leading to a decision	disband dismiss troops
deliverance rescue	discard reject
demean conduct	disclosure revelation
demonstrations praiseworthy features	discompose dismiss
denier penny	discontent resentment
deportment behaviour	discountenance discourage; disapprove of
deprecatory wishing that something unpleasant may be averted	discover reveal
depress suppress, lower in value or status	discovery disclosure, revealing
deputy viceroy	disguise mask
derogation discredit	disme a tenth part; a tithe
desert deserving	dismiss resign voluntarily
design n. intention; vb. designate	disorder sensual indulgence
designment plot	disparagement dishonour, disgrace
desperate to be despaired of; violent, lawless	dispatch finish off, conclude
detect expose	disperse distribute
determine come to an end, settle	dispose bring into a favourable mood
	disposition plan
	dissembling pretending not to see

distance distinction; lapse in time	effeminate grow soft
distance, at against each other	elaborate developed
distaste n. unpleasantness, dissatisfaction; vb. dislike, displease	embarras stopped
distemper n. disorder; vb. spoil the character of	embolden make bold, encourage
distracted hesitating, insane	embrace take up, accept
distress harass in war; lay siege to	emulation rivalry, envy
distressed discomfited; under siege	enable empower, strengthen
divers various [e.g. people]	enchantment deception
divulge make publicly known	endangereth risks producing
donative gift of money; generous present	engage commit; pawn, mortgage
donatives rewards made by the emperors to victorious soldiers	engine plot, stratagem; pl. machines
dormant slumbering, ready to be woken up	ensign badge or flag, insignia
doubt n./vb. fear	entail secure as an inalienable inheritance
doubtful hesitant	enterprising taking risks
dower dowry, inheritance	entertain engage, attract
drape vb. manufacture cloth; do business	entertaining treating
drapery cloth-making	entire n. entirety; adj. open, trustworthy
draw off withdraw, remove	envy grudge, resentment, unpopularity; malice
drily meanly, unresponsively	equal temper even temperature
dry unfruitful	espial n. spy
ducat gold coin	espy perceive
durance imprisonment	estate state, statecraft, rule; pl. social orders (noblemen, commons)
ebb ebb-tide	evacuate annul, cancel
edify prevail, influence	ever completely; always
effect fact	exacting upon extorting payment from
	exactions forceful demands
	examination legal enquiry
	exasperate embittered

exception objection	fast loyal; well-guarded
exchange the profit obtained by a money-lender	fast by near
exercise vb. test, worry, harass	fast-handed close-fisted
exhibition maintenance grant	fastness stronghold; loyalty, constancy
expect await	fatal inevitable; allotted or decreed by fate
expedite lightly equipped	favour good looks
expedited issued	fawn flatter
experimented experienced	fear object of fear
explode reject	fearful timid
exquisite elaborate	feat trick
extenuate make smaller	fee inherited estate
extirpating uprooting	felicity good fortune
extortions illegal taking of money	felon criminal
extremities extreme acts; oppressions	fester poison
eye vb. consider	fiduciary one who holds things in trust
fact deed (Latin <i>factum</i>)	field battlefield
fact, in <i>de facto</i> , not <i>de iure</i>	final decisive
faction intrigue	find give a verdict
faggots bundles of sticks	finder procurer
fair adj. honourable, open; just; adv. probably	fine n. a legal device for the transfer of property; adj. tricky, subtle, astute
fairest most proper	flagrante crimine while the crime is fresh
fall out happen	flame n. uproar
false profession declaration, pretence	flash brief moment
fame rumour; news; reputation	flat dull, uninteresting
familiar crony; personal demon	flies spies
fancy fantasy, imagination	flying vague, insubstantial
farmer tax-collector	foment stir up, spread
farrier one who shoes horses	for ought as far as
fascination casting a spell, sorcery	for that because
	for to in order to
	forbid prevent
	forbore avoided
	forborne abstained from

force civil disorder	glance upon strike, damage
foredone suppressed	go on take place
forepassed allowed to lapse	goal matter of contention
fore-slowing dawdling, wasting time	going softly treading warily
forfeit lose	going concentrating
forthwith at once	good safe
fortune vb. happen	good order good contributions
forward eager; advanced for his years	gossip godfather
forwardness eagerness, fearlessness	grace n. favour, clemency (often royal)
frame n. shape, model; vb. draw up; direct, prepare	grace and countenance vb. encourage
franchise exemption, immunity	gratulation congratulation, compliment
free-booter pirate	gravity seriousness
freedom of thought reserving judgement	greatness magnitude; grandeur; greater extent
fronted confronted, opposed by	green young, inexperienced
frontier border, port of entry	greese steps
fruition enjoyment	griefs grievances
fury, in in rapture	grudge grumble
futile talkative, indiscreet (Latin <i>futilis</i>)	gust outlet
gain help, encourage	habilitate legally qualified
gaoling imprisoning	habit, in in practice
gaudery finery, cheap display	had possessed, enjoyed
gay extravagant, spendthrift	halberdier soldier armed with a halberd (combination of spear and battle-axe)
gaze, at a astonished	half-face partial resemblance
gentle polite	half-pace platform
gibbet gallows	halt limp, stumble
girdle belt	halter rope for hanging
girt fitted out	hand handwriting
give out declare	hand, at close up
given uttered, disseminated	hand, bearing in inducing to believe
glance allusion, reference	

handle mention	home to the maximum extent (cf. 'hammer home')
handling preparation	horse cavalry
handsome convenient, handy	horse-leech blood-sucker
hap n. fortune; vb. happen	house household, lineage
happy fortunate	howsoever although
harbinger person sent in advance to procure lodgings for an army	humour moods, whims
hardly sparingly, with great endurance	humouring indulging
harebrain foolish, madcap	humours the four fluids whose balance was thought necessary to health; fig. opinions, feelings
harness armour	husband, good careful, thrifty manager
harrow rob, spoil	husbanding preserving, consolidating
haughty proud	husbandmen farmers
have the face of look like	husbandry farming, agriculture
haven, in the safely home	
head source, leader	
head, to the fully	
headship patronage, favouring	
hearken listen, take notice of	idea abstract notion
heart pride, dignity	idol false image, illusion
heinous highly criminal, odious	ill bad
held linked	imagination, by in fantasy, not reality
help remedy	imagine plan
high haughty, assertive	impart tell, reveal
high conceit fantasy	impatronize make himself patron or master
high mind strong-willed	impeach accuse of treason
hind labourer, farm-servant	import vb. concern, be important to; signify
hold power	impost import duty
hold, in in custody	imposture fraud
hold up vb. support, protect	impound lock in
holds properties	impression influence, lasting effect; military unit
hollow unsafe	
holp helped, remedied; p.p. holpen	
homager vassal, owing fealty	

impropriate appropriate; gain for one's own	interested involved
impute ascribe to	interruption breach, hindrance
inchoation initial stage, beginning	intestine war civil war
incompetent groundless	inthrall tie up
indifferent impartial, applying equally	intruded unwarranted
indubiate undoubted	invasive aggressive
industries schemes	invention device
inequality inconsistency, wavering	invest take possession of, occupy; secure, acquire
infausting omen of ill-luck	inveterated confirmed
inferring deducing	inviolable unimpaired, integer
infest attack, harass	invite encourage
inform instruct	involved complicated, devious
infused instilled	inward confidential, intimate
ingenerate innate	inwardness confidential communication
inlawed within the protection of the law	issue descendant
inn gather in	iterate repeat
innocent childlike, simpleton	jealousy eagerness, desire; mistrust
innovation constitutional change; pl. new measures	jointure an estate limited to the wife; a dowry
in one at one and the same time	journal daily record
inquisition investigation, inquiry	jubilee time of festivity and rejoicing
instigate urge	juggling deceit, trickery
instil insinuate	just average; proper, full
instrument representative	justness accuracy
intelligence information	keep guard
intend attend to, look after; direct	kindle provoke
intercept stop and seize in passage straying members of an army (deserters)	kindle coals excite bad feelings
interest risk, concern	King's suit (Crown) prosecution

knit woven	light horse cavalry
knitteth unites	like likely
knot band, confederacy	likely imminent
	limited commanded
labour vb. pressurize	line descent, family
laid carefully watched	line, in a under control
landloper vagabond	lineament characteristic
languishing inert, enervated	litigious involving one in
large, at generally	legal disputes
largess generous present	liver living creature; or 'one
late recent	given to good living'
lay down suspend; transfer	livery coat uniform
lay fair was advantageous	lodge record mentally
learned adj. knowing classical	long of on account of
languages	long-robe cleric
leave cease	look to watch over
leaven substance or agent	looking inquiry
causing fermentation (or	lord of the fee financial
discord in society)	officer
lees sediment	lure bait, trap
leese vb. lose, forfeit, disperse	
legiance allegiance, lawful	made for helped
service	made most told most heavily
lest in case	mainly violently
let hesitate, cease	maintained approved, laid
lethargy pathological state of	down by law
inactivity	make on advance
levied forces mobilized	make sport with make fun
troops	of
levity inconstancy,	making good standing firm
insubstantiality	in battle
levy collect an army	malice virulence
libel written defamation	managed trained (in formal
liberal open-handed	manoeuvres)
lieger resident; foreign	mandate order, decision
ambassador resident in	manner means, cause
England	mannerhood social order
life vigour, success	manure cultivate
light vb. alight from a horse	mark target (in archery); a

coin, worth two-thirds of a pound sterling	mitigate reduce, lessen
marshal martial	monstrous unnatural
master-reach superior intelligence	more than that except that
match marriage	motive motion, proposal
mate beat down, overpower	move vb. propose, persuade
matronal womanly, mature	much remarkable
mattacina pantomime, originally a moorish sword-dance	much made on received with great honour
matter firm evidence; person; quantity, amount; figure	muck manure, fertilizer
matters affairs of state	murmur complain, protest
may-game Merrymaking trad. associated with 1st of May; frolic, foolery	murrey colour of the mulberry; purple-red
mean an intermediary; the means	muster n. census report; vb. assemble troops
memorials memoranda	mutability change
mend improve	mutined rebellious
menial domestic	mystery secret matter
mercier dealer in textiles	naked insubstantial
merchand vb. negotiate, bargain	name reputation
mercurial cunning, tricky fellow	names titles
merely entirely	nations nationalities
mew moult, shed	natural indigenous, native, naturalized
middle acts intermediate steps (aiding and abetting)	natures kinds, sources
militar military, martial	nearness parsimony
mind vb. plan	neck, in the following close upon
minority being under the legal age of adulthood	need, for a if necessary
mint coinage of money	never however
mintman maker of coins	new newly
missive letter of summons	news events
mite copper coin of minimal value	nice fussy, fastidious
	nimble agile
	no not not even
	nocent harmful
	noise rumour
	not be expressed inexpressibly great

note comment on	overbear overcome (all other considerations)
notorious conspicuous	over-cast overestimate
nuncio messenger	overlaid burdened
obloquy bad repute; reproach	over-liver survivor
obnoxious exposed to, under the influence of; indebted to, deferential	over-measuring overestimating
obsequies funeral rites	over-ruling setting aside
obsequious obedient, prompt to serve	overseen deceived, mistaken
obstinate resistant	overture proposal
obtain attain	over-weighed outweighed
occasion circumstance; pretext	own vb. claim responsibility for
occurrent event; occurrence	packet communication
odds difference, disproportion	pain penalty
offer propose	paramount pre-eminent
office official position	pare cut, reduce
officious efficient	parley discussion
often adj. frequent	parricide murder in general
oil soothing medicine	part role; pl. qualities
openness sincerity	part, in good favourably
opinion popular repute	partaker confederate, ally, sharer
oppignorated pawned, given in pledge	particular minute description; pl. individuals
oracle authoritative utterance	party part, share; political group, faction
ordained predestined	pass vb. issue; accept
ordinance order, arrangement	pass examination survive
ordnance military stores or supplies	passable acceptable
orizons prayers (Latin <i>orationes</i>)	passage detail; course of events
out of outside; beyond	passing exceedingly
outlawry decree putting a person outside the protection of the law	passion feelings, emotions
outrage attack	patronize protect
	peasant serf
	pedant schoolmaster

pedantical savouring of the schoolmaster	point scruple; pl. pieces of lace used for handkerchiefs, etc.
pent confined, shut in	point at mention, indicate
penury poverty	policy diplomacy; sagacity in public affairs; devious manoeuvres, trickery;
peremptory destructive, irremediable	political expediency
perfection completion	politic political; cunning
perforce by force	politiques men in public life
perfume advance notice	poll pillage, plunder
peril risk	pontifical priestly, papal
period end	Pope's Bull a papal edict or mandate (named after the leaden seal attached to the document)
perpetrate perform	popular enjoying the people's favour
perplexed entangled	port behaviour, expenditure
person <i>persona</i> , role, mask; character	pose interrogate
personage body, figure	possessed convinced
personation impersonation	post n. messenger
perspective searching, inspection	post, in in haste
pesterous troublesome	postilled annotated
piece part, role; piece of news	practice trickery, treachery, evil intrigue
piece with reconcile	practise vb. pretend, scheme, plot
pieced better was more apt	practise upon manipulate
pile large, imposing building	pray request
pill peel, strip bare, rob	preamble speech
pin peg	precept written order, warrant
plate silver	prefer promote
plausible praiseworthy	preferment appointment, position
play real-life drama; deception	prejudge have a prejudice against, as supposedly inauspicious
plea the presentation of a legal suit or action in court	
pleasantly jocularly	
pledge guarantor, a person acting as surety for another	
plume to strip off the feathers	

present, at this at this time	protract prolong
presently immediately	proud belligerent
preservative safeguard	prove test
press insist on, force	providence foresight
prest n. loan (French <i>prêt</i>)	provision precaution
prest prepared	publish make known
pretend to aspire to	puncto nice observance
preternatural abnormal	purchase gain, profit
prevail succeed	purge excuse, disclaim
prevent anticipate, arrive	responsibility
before; obstruct, block	purporting declaring
privado counsellor; intimate	put by pass over
friend	put down dispose of
privateness confidential	put . . . from hinder
communication	put on disseminate; urge,
privily secretly, covertly	promote
privity private knowledge	put upon attribute, transfer
privy secret	to
procedure proceeds, profit	quail spoil, weaken
proceed with bring before	qualify moderate, reduce,
court	pacify
process proceedings,	quality high birth, or social
behaviour	rank
proclaim declare	quarrel accuse
procurator official,	quarrel, in his on his behalf
representing the interests	quicken animate
of others	quiet vb. secure
profit personal gain	quire choir
prognostic forecast, portent	race breed; stables
progress royal journey or	rag fragment
tour through the land	rage violence, vehemence
project scheme	railed tied up
promiscuously indifferently	raising advancing, promoting
property characteristic	rake-hell dissolute rascal
propound propose	ranging looking further
proscribe banish	rankle upset
protector the official	rapine robbery
guardian of a ruler in his	
minority	

rascal rabble	remnant left-over
rates terms, fines; expectation of revenues from tax	renovation renewal
rather, the the more	rent rupture
reach scheme	renvoying sending back again
*ready in a proper state	repair go, proceed
really positively	repair unto join with
reason of state national interest	reparation amends
reasonable use at the opportune moment	repenting of regretting, reconsidering
received accepted	replaced restored
reception recovery	reprehend blame
recess pause	re-purchase win back again
reciprocal return gift	reputation fame
reclaim call back from wrong-doing	requital, by way of in retaliation
recover reach, gain	resembled compared
rectify restore to health	reservation reservedness
reduce compel, conquer	resiance residence, mansion
reduce to restore	resolution resolve, intention
reeling swaying unsteadily	resolve take a decision
reflect upon have regard unto	respect consideration
refrain hold back; keep in check, forbear	respect, in because
refresh revive, sustain	respective considerate
reft bereft, robbed	restitution repayment
regality royal prerogative; a royal person formally acknowledged	restrained confined
regiment rule	retire military withdrawal
relate narrate	retract withdraw
relation report	retreat, past gone beyond withdrawal
relic survivor	retribution reward, recompense
religious people monks	return n. profit; reply
reluctation reluctance	returned elected as MPs
remembrance memorandum	reverent respectful
remit refer	ribbands ribbons
	rid managed
	right true
	ring noise
	rip up put about, spread

rise rebel	secreted kept concealed
rode raid	secure without care, complacent
round direct, speedy	sedition rebellion, insurrection
roundly thoroughly, without circumlocution or delay	seemly handsome
rout n. riot, rabble; vb. assemble in a riot or rabble	seen skilled
rude common (illiterate), unlearned	seigniory a feudal lord's right to bestow his ward in marriage as he chose
ruffle with interfere, handle roughly	sensible sensitive
runagate vagabond	sensible of sympathetic towards; aware of, responsive to
sad settled, grave, sober; trustworthy	set establish, plan; agree upon
sadly solemnly	set down mark, notice
safe salutary, tending to safety	set forth invest
sage wise	set off display
sanctuary a place securing immunity to fugitives	set on stir up
sap undermine	settle determine
scandal rumour, slander	several separate, distinct, different
science knowledge	sharp sarcastic
scrivener money lender	shearer trimmer of animals' fleece; fig. rapacious person
scruple suspicion, doubt, uncertainty	sheathe put away voluntarily
scutcheon coat of arms or shield, which sometimes recorded military honours	shew n. token, sign
seal up keep secret	shew, in apparently
sea-mark conspicuous object to guide or warn sailors	shifting evasive
season, in the mean meanwhile	shifts expedients
second n. helper; vb. support	shoaring supporting
second-nobles gentry	shuffle up rake together
	shut up conclude
	sift examine closely
	silenced not talked of
	simple half-witted
	simplicity stupidity

simulation pretending to be something one is not	sport amusement
sincere straightforward	sport, in jokingly
singular single	spots, livid bluish-grey
sinister evil	pustules
size regulate the size of	spread vb. display; adj. enlarged
skein short dagger used by Irishmen and Highlanders	sprites ghosts, phantoms
skill vb. know how to do	squibs small and ineffective fireworks
skilled signified	squint cast
skirts lower slopes	staddles young trees left standing
smoke away drive off	stake, put to the test
smother smoulder, suffocate	stand withstand, put up with
so provided that	stand to affirm
soberly cautiously	stand together agree
softness weakness, effeminacy	stand upon insist
solace pleasure, amusement	standard military flag
sort adapt to something	startle amaze
sorted with resulted	state n. display, ceremony; statesmanship, government; social class
sorting agreeing; suitable to	state, keep vb. maintain a dignified manner
sought unto requested, petitioned	states authorities
sound probe, discover the inclinations	stay n. steadiness, knowing when to stop; vb. delay, interrupt; lay emphasis; prevent, stop, wait
spare for omit	staying expecting, awaiting
sparing merciful	stay long for await (without acting)
specious fair-seeming; deceptively attractive	stellionate counterfeit merchandise or other frauds
speculative inquisitive, prying	stint check
speech report	stock available wealth, resources
speed, upon directly	
spials spies	
spirits, vital those on which life depends	
spleen ill-humour	
spoil vb. loot, plunder	
spoils booty	

stocks	cattle, livestock	suddenly	soon
stomach	inclination, disposition; pride, courage	suffer	allow
stone	gem	sufficiency	ability, competence
stoop	swoop down on a prey	sufficient	competent
stop	obstacle	suits	petitions
store	quantities	summarily	in a brief form
stout	strong-hearted, brave	superfluity	luxury
stoutness	overbearing manner	suppositious	illegitimate
strain up	stretch, force	surcharge	impute
strait	close, strict, rigorous	sure	secure; in captivity
straits	difficulties	surmised	alleged
strange	forbidding, unfriendly	surveyor of works	manager of estates and buildings
strangeness	unfriendliness	swain	peasant
stranger	adj. foreign, immigrant	sway	inclination
strengthen	give material support (Latin <i>confortare</i>)	sweating-sickness	a contagious disease marked by excessive sweating
stricken	struck	sycophant	impostor, deceiver
strife	competition	table	picture
strings	root-filaments	table, at the	at the negotiating table
stripling	youth	taint	infect
strive with	contend against	take	capture; charm
stroking	flattering	take aim	form a plot
strongly	emphatically	take off	absorb
stuck	hesitated	take place	assert itself
style	title	take up	engage in
submiss	submissive	taking	advancing
subsidy	tax	talk	rumours
subtile	cunning	tall	courageous
subtlest	most cunning	tallages	tolls, levies
succeed	follow	taskes	taxes, duties
succession	dynasty	taste	n. hint
succour	support, supporter	taunt	mockery
such as	those who	tax	criticize
suck	draw, derive	taxation	censure, reproof
suck in	absorb, apprehend		

temper n. degree; make-up; mood; vb. moderate, prepare	toy amusement, trifle
temporalty secular authorities	tract protraction, lapse (of time); trait, feature
temporize play for time	tradition testimony, information
tempting testing	traded misrepresented
tender n. offer; vb. mind, care for; adj. considerate, sensitive	trains and mines treacherous plots
tenor content, meaning	traitor traitorous
terms extent	translate transfer
terror menace	treasure coin, currency; riches, revenue
texture woven fabric	treat negotiate
that that which	treaty treatment, handling of the matter
therefore on that account	treaty, in being negotiated
thought anxiety, distress of mind, worry	trench affect, concern
thrid thread	trepidation trembling, alarm
ticklish sensitive, unstable, tricky	tres magi three wise men
time epoch	trial test
time was, when . . . in time past	tribute tax, levy; compensation
tinner tin-miner	triplicity union of three
tissick pulmonary consumption	triumph festivity, celebration
title claim, legal right	trophy memorial to honour a victory, originally arms or other spoils set up on the battlefield
toil trap	try test
took land landed (after a sea-voyage)	turn change, transformation
took on resumed	turns, had their alternated
touch vb. mention, hint, deal with	tutelage guardianship, protection
touched injured	umbrage offence
tourney tournament	unbestowed unmarried
towardness promise	uncomely improper, unseemly
towards in the conceiving or planning of; threatening	under-hand secretly

under-set with supported by	vote voice
understand take note of	vouchsafe give, acknowledge
unlike unlikely	vulgar common people;
unprofitable ineffective	commonplace
unrip undo	
unsecreting divulging	
untoward unfavourably	wait upon take part in
critical, unlucky	walk appear, haunt
unworthy of unsuitable for	wandering vague
up in a state of revolt or	wanne won
insurrection	want n. need, poverty; vb.
upon against, on account of;	lack
out of	wanton lascivious
ure use, practice	wantonness mischief
use, do are wont	ward orphan in the custody
used usual	of a guardian
utility usefulness, public	warning notice, for
benefit	preparation
uxorious devoted to one's	warrant authorization
wife	watch surveillance
	way wake
vain light-minded	weal welfare
vain-glory boastfulness,	weed garment, dress
excessive pride	well-appointed well
vainly in a vain, futile	equipped
manner	well assured reliable, faithful
vantage upon profit from	well-favoured good-looking
vant-guard vanguard,	wheel about change plans,
foremost division	direction
vapour exhalation, current of	wheels sources of trade
air	whet on incite
varlet hired menial servant	will desire
vecture transportation	wing flank
vendible for sale	wink at overlook
vent make known, disperse	wit ability, brain, intelligence,
veteran skilled, professional	understanding
voice vb. spread news	with . . . Europe for us
voiding expulsion	Europeans
voluntary volunteer	withal also; thereby

Glossary

withdrawing-chamber

private room

without outside

woad plant producing blue
dye

work manipulate, persuade,
operate on

work upon manipulate, extort
from

wormwood bitterness

worn out entirely dispersed

worth n. importance,
distinction

would should like to; wanted
to

would have wish, want

wreath circular band of
interwoven flowers,
leaves, etc., worn on the
head as a mark of honour

wrench lever, means of
compulsion

writ wrote

wrought worked; caused;
rankled

Yeoman-of-his-Guard

a royal body guard,
introduced by Henry VII

yeomanry peasant class

yield give, agree

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